MINING — ACCIDENTS
1993

...
Mine death toll rises to three

Staff Reporter

The death toll in Friday's mining accident at Western Holdings in Welkom rose to three following the discovery of another body this morning, Anglo American Corporation said.

Another three miners were still missing, and seven were in hospital with injuries suffered during a rockfall caused by a "seismic event", AAC spokesman Theresa Erasmus said today. One of the injured men was in a serious condition.

The accident took place at the mine's Number 5 shaft, on 43 level, 1,600 m below the surface. The event measured 3.0 on the Richter Scale.

Search and rescue operations are continuing.
NEWS IN BRIEF

Mine death toll up

THE bodies of four miners missing after a seismic event on Friday at Anglo American’s Western Holdings mine in Welkom had been recovered 1,700m below the surface, raising the death toll to six, an Anglo spokesman said. A further seven workers, one in a serious condition, had been admitted to hospital. 10 AM
3 die, 4 injured in rockfall on mine

THREE miners were killed and four injured in a rockfall 2,500 metres underground at Elandrand gold mine, near Carletonville, on Saturday. The injured were treated in hospital but were not in serious condition. - Sapa
Miner compensated

BLOEMFONTEIN, RAY HARTLEY (21-12)

WHITE mine worker Jacobus van der Merwe yesterday thanked the NUM for securing a R22 000 compensation payment from Vaal Reefs for injuries sustained in an underground accident in 1990.

Van der Merwe said the payment was agreed to in December last year following a month of negotiations with management. He joined the NUM in November 1992 after the white Mineworkers' Union told him there was nothing that could be done to help him.

The payment was for an operation to restore sensation to his arms, treat a burn sustained during treatment, and pain and suffering, he said.

NUM president James Motlati said up to 2 000 white workers disillusioned with their union had joined the NUM countrywide.

He said mine workers' unity in a declining industry was more important than racial or political differences. "Politics may have been a problem in the past, but now miners' interests are paramount."

Van der Merwe, who was a member of the Mineworkers' Union for 17 years, has subsequently undergone a second operation and plans to claim further costs from the mining company.

He said the mine's Rand Mutual Hospital had told him he would have to live with pain he experienced since the first operation.
LABOUR BRIEFS

DANGEROUS WORK

There were almost 9,000 accidents on South African mines last year, according to statistics from the Government Mining Engineer.

The accidents claimed 59 lives while 1,808 workers were injured.

About 70 percent of the accidents occurred on gold mines where 407 gold miners were killed, making it the most hazardous occupation in the country.

Gold mining is followed by platinum prospecting where 455 accidents claimed 33 lives and resulted in 428 injuries.

There were 393 accidents and 46 fatalities on the coal mines while 143 accidents claimed 29 diamond miners.

SUNDAY SLOG

To save on further retrenchments, three mines recently applied to government for permission to work on Sundays.

The H. J. Joel, Lenah and Harmony mines could soon be drilling and blasting on Sundays. JCT's Joel mine will also soon send certain employees on three months' unpaid leave.
Miner dies in rock fall

JOHANNESBURG — A miner has died and four are missing following a rockfall at Western Deep Levels' West Mine near Carletonville yesterday.
Body of miner found

RESCUED workers at Western Deep Levels' West Mine near Carletonville yesterday recovered the body of another miner missing since Monday's rockfall.

Altogether five miners died and three were slightly injured in the rockfall which occurred 3.3km below the surface on November 30.

Mines owners Anglo American said the fall of ground was caused by a tremor just after midday on Monday.

Lawyers choose SA

THE International Bar Association, the world's largest law society organisation, is to hold its first ever regional conference in South Africa next month. The three-day conference, which will be held in Cape Town from February 7, will be officially opened by President F.W. de Klerk. 

Durban, November 28.
All saved from burning mine

By EUGENE PARAMOER

RESCUE workers battled for hours at the weekend to save more than 100 Namaqualand mineworkers trapped in a burning copper mine.

As smoke filled the Carolusberg Copper Mine near O'Kiep just after 3pm on Friday, mineworkers fled and holed up in emergency shelters underground.

Rescue workers battled till the early hours of Saturday morning to rescue them.

Police spokesman Major Johan van Wyk said the mine cable caught fire, probably from a lightning strike, causing gases and smoke to spread through the mine tunnels.

"Most of the mineworkers were evacuated to safety chambers in the tunnels when the gases started to spread. The chambers are Alright with oxygen and two-way communication with the control room," he said.

Rescue workers had to go down one shaft to get to trapped workers who were in another shaft. The miners were evacuated from the mine in groups.

The last people were evacuated about 1am Saturday morning, said Major Van Wyk. No one was injured.

A miner who was in the mine at the time of the incident but who was able to escape with a few of his colleagues said "About 2pm the power went out and then some cables in the shafts ignited and thick columns of smoke and gas started to spread through the shafts."

The miner, who asked not to be named, said the smoke was so thick that at some points he could not even see his colleagues. "The smoke was everywhere."

He said they were close to the surface and managed to make their way out of the shafts by pressing wet clothes to their mouths and noses and by holding onto each other's hands.

"We also had to shout to each other to guide ourselves out of the smoke-filled shafts," he said.

Relatives, who were unaware of how serious the accident was, had to wait anxiously for miners to return home.

"I started to get worried when my husband did not return at 5pm on Friday," the wife of one of the miners said. "I expected the mine to send someone to tell us what had happened."

She said her husband only came home about 3am on Saturday.

Mr Michael de Kock, a spokesman for Gold Fields, the mine owners, confirmed the incident. He said they were investigating the cause of the fire.
Rockfall: Two miners die

JOHANNESBURG — Two mineworkers died and five were injured in a rockfall at Western Deep Levels' West Mine near Carletonville yesterday.
Two more miners die at Western Deep Levels

ANOTHER two mine workers died and five were injured in a rockfall more than 3km underground at Anglo American’s Western Deep Levels west mine near Carletonville yesterday.

This brings to 10 the number of workers killed on Western Deep’s mines this year. Last year 63 miners died at Western Deep mine, compared with 39 in 1991 and 58 in 1990.

Anglo American spokesman James Duncan said yesterday’s rockfall occurred at 116 level, 330m below the surface, after a tremor measuring 3.0 on the Richter scale.

The NUM condemned the “waste of lives” on the mines and said the sooner the independent commission into safety on the mines was established, the sooner the safety problems leading to the “tragic loss of lives” would begin to be addressed.

Duncan said Western Deep Levels mines suffered the most fatalities of any mine in SA because of the depth at which mining was taking place.

The problems at Western Deep were being addressed by providing 100% backfill on the Carbon Leader reefs on its east and west mines. The 100% target had virtually been reached.

On the shallower Ventersdorp Contact reef on its south mine, 15% backfill had been provided. This would be adjusted according to necessity, said Duncan.

In addition, the integrated seismic system had been expanded and upgraded. The computer and geophysics-based intelligence gathering device already enabled mines to be alerted to potential dangers. It covered the whole mine and had increased the accuracy of the information available.

However, Duncan said, it was not yet possible to establish in advance where seismic events might occur.

A new stope support system — with hydraulic props of increased density and new lightweight headboards — was being implemented. Backfill was being moved closer to the working face as an added support system.
Mine death inquiry

THE death of 11 miners at Rand Mines Durban Deep mine last year was investigated by an independent commission of inquiry this week. (212)

Kathleen Satchwell headed the investigation into violence among workers at the mine on Christmas and Boxing days last year which also resulted in injuries to 20 miners. She will make recommendations on steps to be taken to prevent a recurrence of violence.
Mines had to be prodded

XAVIER Cossa travelled 1,500 km from his home in northern Mozambique to Johannesburg to collect his long service payment from the Chamber of Mines.

He arrived only to find he has another five years to wait – the 1993 collection date he had been given by mine officials when he was retrenched two years ago was wrong.

Stranded and penniless, with no way of getting back to his village near Vilanculos, 800 km north of Maputo, Cossa approached City Press.

Cossa worked on contract to Teba from 1965 to 1990. On his retrenchment from Rand Mutual Hospital in 1980, he was given a certificate which stated he would qualify for the award when he turned 50 in 1993.

From his severance pay he saved enough to travel back to Johannesburg for the money.

He had nothing left to live on, no prospects of a job, a disabled wife and seven kids to feed.

Teba officials said he had been given the wrong information.

City Press appealed to the Chamber to pay Cossa’s fare back to Mozambique because it was their mistake which had caused him to travel to Johannesburg.

The Chamber has now arranged for him to be transported back to Mozambique.
L Labour News But workers will share in profits of some of the mines

Tough year lies ahead for wage talks on the mines

By Ike Motsapi

The National Union of Mine workers is gearing itself for another tough year of wage negotiations for its members.

Like the wage talks in 1992, the NUM expects no great improvement this year.

In 1992 only 20 out of 100 wage settlements yielded increases above the 13.5 percent mid-year inflation rate.

The basic wage increases last year were very low for the second year in a row.

This is regarded as the only way to save jobs when the gold price is low.

However, workers will be in a position to share in the profits of some of the healthy mines as well as the profits of some of the "sick mines if they make money."

It is also predicted that the average wage increases will vary between five and nine percent.

Prices have risen

What the mine bosses failed to take into consideration when granting wage increases is that since 1983 prices have risen by 35 percent while increases in basic salaries have been barely over 10 percent.

The continuing recession in South Africa, coupled with very slow recovery in the international markets, has meant another year of poor wage settlements, retrenchments and rationalization.

Mr. Jerry Majatladi, media officer of the NUM, said, "On the bright side the NUM has concluded formal negotiations with Impala Platinum Mines for the first time ever."

"This yielded a good increase above inflation for most workers. "At the Rossleigh Gold Mine, workers achieved a remarkable increase of 160 percent."

The basic wage is now only R409 a month but this is a vast improvement on the R158 a month paid before the branch was organized," Majatladi said.

During 1992 the Chamber of Mines Wage agreements, with their Annexures and appendices, extended to over 70 pages for gold and 30 pages for coal.

"This is the longest and most complex wage agreement ever signed by the NUM."

He added that the extra-ordinary and difficult circumstances of the mines at present and the NUM's efforts to preserve jobs and protect standards, particularly on the gold mines, were a factor in the negotiations.

New basic wages were paid by the mining houses in August and September last year following the negotiations with the Chamber of Mines.

Agreement was delayed

The signing of the main gold mines agreement was delayed by the NUM's insistence that it include the details of profit-sharing schemes at certain mines which had been negotiated in a separate forum.

Profit-sharing agreements with Anglo American and Blyvooruitzicht were concluded in October and Gengold in December.

This year, as in 1991 and 1992, agreements will be focused to make up for lower wages by significant gains in non-wage areas.

"This trend will need to be followed across the industry and trade unions need a proper action plan on the ground to make these paper rights real," Majatladi added.

The NUM this year wants talks with the mining houses on issues affecting sick or injured workers.

According to Majatladi, the NUM has challenged mine doctors and mine management on their right to dismiss and repatriate workers on medical grounds without consultation with the union.

He said that some mines the repatriation of their members was done to circumvent the normal procedures of retraining which required union involvement.

The 1992 agreement gives workers the right of representation by NUM when they are threatened with dismissal or transfer to another job on the grounds of medical incapacity.

Majatladi said a joint approach by employers and the NUM to the Government on the new law on occupational diseases has been mooted. He said, "The present law that deals with compensation for occupational diseases on the mines is racist and discriminatory."

"A black miner gets less compensation than his fellow white counterpart for the same disease," Majatladi said.

The NUM has also convinced bosses of most gold mines to increase their contribution to the provident fund by one percent.

This means that employers will contribute six percent of basic pay to the provident fund rather than the present five percent.

The other points agreed to by the NUM and mining houses are:

- The chamber has agreed to pay the lost shifts of workers who attend negotiations with it.
- The chamber has adopted an industry-wide policy to encourage miners to agree to full time shop stewards. This issue will now be taken up at mine-level.
- The chamber has also issued a statement that encourages miners to enter into agreements on arbitration on dismissal cases.

It was felt that compulsory arbitration would cost miners nothing but would help workers who are denied the right to get back quick responses to their cases and.

- That the subscription administration fee of the NUM will no longer be subject to the deduction of the present five percent.
Mine fire kills 3 — 2.5km down

JOHANNESBURG — Three miners died in a fire 2.5km underground in Buffelsfontein gold mine in the western Transvaal yesterday, Gengold said last night.

Six other miners received medical attention underground before being evacuated.

Carbon monoxide emitted by the fire is thought to have caused the three deaths.

About 200 miners were evacuated from the mine. — Sapa
3 miners suffocate in fire at gold mine

By Brian Sokuta and Philip Zoio

Three miners suffocated yesterday when their breathing devices failed during a fire at Gengold's Buffelsfontein gold mine near Stillfontein.

Thirteen miners were injured, one critically, in the fire which started at 1.15pm in the mine's southern shaft, mine management said.

It said seven injured workers were taken to the Duff Scott Memorial Mine Hospital near Stillfontein.

A doctor at the hospital told The Star six workers had been critically injured.

Wearing oxygen masks, some miners lay motionless on their hospital beds while others walked around slowly.

Despite having been given permission by mine officials to interview the injured, a hospital clerk stopped The Star during an interview, saying the management had telephoned to say no press interviews should be granted.

Before being interrupted, survivor Elias Mgadeni (27) said the situation underground was "terrible" after the accident.

Mgadeni, a Transkei citizen, said he saw one of his colleagues collapse.

Three rescue teams battled for almost five hours to clear the shaft of carbon monoxide gas and bring the survivors to the surface.

Addressing a press conference last night, mine general manager Sean O'Connor said he believed the carbon monoxide monitors worn by mineworkers to detect the gas and help them breathe "had a fault."

By 5pm, five of the 16 men had been found underground in a "very weak condition" They were being treated underground yesterday afternoon.

By 6pm, the bodies of the three dead men had been recovered, and another man had been found in a "poor condition." He was also receiving treatment underground last night.

Gengold managing director Gary Moote said the names of the dead would be released once their next-of-kin had been informed.

It is estimated about 200 miners had to be evacuated, Sapa reports.

The cause of the fire is being investigated, and production will be resumed as soon as the area is declared safe.
Three miners suffocated

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — Three miners suffocated when their breathing devices failed during a fire at Gengold'sBuffelsfontein gold mine near Stilfontein.

Thirteen other miners were injured, one critically, in the fire which started yesterday afternoon in the mine's southern shaft, mine management said.

It said seven injured workers were taken to the Duff Scott Memorial Mine Hospital near Stilfontein.

A doctor at the hospital said six workers had been critically injured.
Underground fire kills three miners

THREE miners were killed and at least 13 injured yesterday when an underground fire broke out at Gengold's Buffelsfontein gold mine in the western Transvaal.

Gengold public relations manager Andrew Davidson said last night evacuation from the 28th level of the southern shaft began shortly after 10am after shift boss John Saber detected carbon monoxide.

Thirty minutes later, gas was detected on the 27th level and an evacuation was begun there. Rescue teams were rushed in to remove the gas.

At 1pm a miner phoned fire control to say he was in trouble and 15 of his colleagues were missing.

The miner then collapsed, said Davidson, and was assisted to a refuge chamber where seven of his missing colleagues had found shelter.

At 5.30pm rescue teams discovered that three of the missing nine workers were dead. The other six were found injured, one seriously.

The injured were taken to Duas Scott Hospital in Stilfontein. Seven other miners were taken to the hospital suffering from gas inhalation. The miners were not in danger, said Davidson.

By late last night, rescue teams were still on the scene, checking gas levels and assisting miners from other levels to the surface where their condition could be assessed. Davidson said the cause of fire had not been established by last night.

A company statement said production had been halted by the blaze.

Two people died on the mine last month in separate accidents.
Three miners suffocate

THREE miners suffocated and died when their breathing devices failed during a fire at Gengoid's Buffelsfontein gold mine near Sulfonem yesterday. Thirteen others were injured, one of them critically, when the fire broke out at 1:15 pm in the mine's southern shaft.

Three mine rescue teams battled for about five hours to clear the shaft of carbon monoxide gas and to bring the survivors to the surface. A mine spokesman said he believed the carbon monoxide monitors worn by miners to detect the gas and help them breathe "had a fault."
Miners evacuated

ALL the miners who had been trapped by a fire 2,4km underground at Buffelsfontein Gold Mine in the Western Transvaal on Monday have been accounted for, Genmin announced yesterday.

Three miners died as a result of the fire at 27 level of the southern shaft. According to Genmin, 14 miners were admitted to hospital following the fire, seven of whom were discharged yesterday and two are still in intensive care.
Gengold criticised

DIRK HARTFORD
THE NUM has slammed mine safety measures following the deaths of three miners at Gengold's Buffelsfontein gold mine.

The union said it suspected a cover-up after Gengold spokesman Andrew Davidson denied reports that the miners died because of faulty breathing apparatus.

Davidson said they had died in a gassing incident in the southern shaft, 2,400m below the surface. Six survivors were still in hospital.

Davidson said the miners had rescue packs and no evidence could be found of faulty equipment.

The fire resulted in the loss of 1,000 tons of ore, or 6kg of gold.

Meanwhile, NUM assistant general secretary Marcel Golding said his union and the Council of Mining Unions were due to meet Health Minister Rina Venter at the end of this month to discuss problems with amendments to the Occupational Diseases Act.
Mine defends its safety

JOHANNESBURG — Any suggestion that miners were allowed to continue working after gas fumes had been detected at the Buffelsfontein Gold Mine on Monday was completely untrue, Gengold said yesterday.

Gengold spokesman Mr Andrew Davidson said the three people who died in the fire were overcome while the area was being evacuated.

Mr Davidson was reacting to the National Union of Mineworkers’ allegations that workers were not evacuated swiftly enough after detection devices indicated a fire had broken out in the Western Transvaal gold mine.

He said evacuation began immediately the fumes were detected.

Meanwhile, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) general secretary, Mr Marcel Golding, announced yesterday that Goldfields’ mines are to be “colonised” this year by the union.

By “colonising” mines, the NUM meant it wanted to “take control of the working environment to safeguard workers’ interests”, Mr Golding said at a press conference — Sapa.
18 die in 80 mine accidents

South Africa's mines claimed 18 lives in 80 accidents in the first 40 days of this year, National Union of Mineworkers assistant secretary-general Marcel Golding said yesterday. (Page 7)
18 deaths in mine accidents this year

By Montshiwa Moroke

South Africa's mines have claimed 18 lives in 80 accidents in the first 40 days of this year, National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) assistant secretary-general Marcel Golding said yesterday.

Golding said mine deaths would be among the issues debated at a crucial three-day NUM central committee meeting starting in Pretoria today.

The committee would also debate the role of the unions in the country's next democratic general elections, he said. Some 300 delegates from 16 regions were expected to attend the meeting.

Golding said that two months ago, the NUM had proposed to the Government that a judicial commission of inquiry into the high rate of mine accidents in South Africa be appointed. "Somebody is sitting on our proposal," he said.

The union was also still waiting for Gencor to provide a report on safety standards in its mines.

Golding said the committee, on the political front, would hold discussions on whether it should put up candidates in support of the ANC alliance.

Gengold yesterday stressed that no miners were working at the Buffelsfontein Gold Mine after gas fumes, which killed three miners on Monday, were detected.

Gengold spokesman Andrew Davidson said the three people who died in the fire were overcome while the area was being evacuated.

The NUM has alleged that workers were not evacuated swiftly enough after detection devices had indicated that a fire had broken out in the western Transvaal gold mine.
Although the NMC will strive for consensus, each member will have a vote, "implying that the points of view of the largest and most impor-

tant are given due weight," he said.

All the major employer associations have appointed members to the commission.

LABOUR BRIEFS

NUM Committee in session

THE National Union of Mineworkers began its three day central committee meet-
ing yesterday.

The 300 delegates at the meeting — the highest decision-making body after congress — will decide on wage and working condition demands for 1993.

It will be the first union to debate Cosatu's draft Reconstruction Accord and decide whether the labour movement should field candidates in elections, says assistant general secretary Marcel Golding.

The union is likely to consolidate profi-

Demand for judicial inquiry

MINEs' unions are likely to step up demands for a judicial inquiry into mine deaths, focusing on standards and enforcement authorities.

During this year 24 miners have died and 21 have been injured in accidents at the Atok, Western Holdings, Elandsfontein, Western Deep Levels and Buffelsfontein mines.
NUM general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe addresses yesterday’s news conference on the union’s plans for this year. He is flanked by assistant general secretary Marcel Golding, left, and president James Motlatsi.

**Miners' union accuses government of stalling**

_Dirk Hartford_ (212)

GOVERNMENT was accused yesterday of stalling on making a decision about setting up an independent health and safety commission into the mining industry after eight months of negotiations on the issue.

NUM assistant general secretary Marcel Golding said in an interview the mining industry and the NUM agreed on the need for an independent, judicial commission of inquiry last year, but had waited for months for government to enact it. Golding also slammed Finance Minister Derek Keys for sitting for the past three months on a proposal, supported by employers, for tax breaks on retrenchment packages.

He said government was making a big mistake if it saw the union’s reasonableness as weakness. Keys was considering “further attacks on the working class and the poor” with increased VAT, but was apparently not willing to grant tax relief on retrenchment packages.

The NUM wanted government to look to the rich instead of the poor to balance its books. Revenue should be raised through capital gains tax, a wealth tax, increased tax on luxury goods and through the abolition of tax loopholes.

There were also negotiations with Health Minister Nita Venter to reform the 'presets' Occupational Diseases Act. Black miners were paid 13 times less than white miners in compensation for the same diseases.

**NUM agrees to back ANC in election deal**

_Dirk Hartford_ (212)

THE NUM’s 300-strong central committee decided at the weekend to give its fullest support to the ANC’s election campaign on the basis of a signed reconstruction accord between Cosatu and the ANC.

NUM president James Motlatsi said the accord, which would be binding on the ANC as part of a future government, should include: Workers’ rights embodied in the workers’ charter which should be protected and guaranteed by an ANC government; An action programme to address poverty, job creation, education and training; Making sure a new government consulted with “democratic forces” and had an accountable leadership.

The NUM also decided to ask Cosatu to establish an election campaign fund.

It wanted the ANC to ensure that workers from neighboring countries who had been in SA for more than five years got SA citizenship and the right to vote.

BLOM 16/12/93.

The NUM would set up its own election campaign committee to assist the ANC in the election campaign. This could include releasing experienced organizers and marshals to build the ANC’s campaign.

Motlatsi said the union would also be prepared to allow its leaders to stand on an ANC election ticket if requested to do so. The NUM’s organizers include two ANC regional chairmen and one SACP regional chairman.

Noting that “nothing can be won by our leaders at the negotiating table if it cannot be defended through mass struggle”, the NUM declared 1993 the year of transfer of power to the people.
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- Workers’ rights embodied in the ANC charter, which should be protected and guaranteed by an ANC government.
- An action programme to address poverty, job creation, education and training, and health care.
- Making sure a new government is consulted with “democratic forces” and has an accountable leadership.

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Noting that “nothing can be won by our leaders at the negotiating table if it cannot be defended through mass struggle”, the NUM declared 1999 the year of transfer of power to the people.
THE police officer presently leading the investigation into the murder of African National Congress Natal Midlands member Mr Regge Hadebe had to be given an opportunity to solve the case before being replaced, the Government said yesterday. ANC-aligned MP Mr Rob Haswell had asked Mr Heman Kriel, Minister of Law and Order, to put the "credible investigator" Major Frank Dutton on to the case. Hadebe was killed last October.

NUM comes under fire

THE United Workers Union of South Africa (Uwasa) yesterday lashed out at the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) for saying it would field candidates in a general election on an ANC ticket. Uwusa said it was "extremely dangerous" for the NUM to assist the ANC during the elections. - Sowetan Reporters.
Mine death questioned

By Mathatha Tseu

The National Union of Mineworkers has asked pathologist Dr. Jonathan Gluckman to conduct a second post mortem on the body of a miner who died in the Brakspuit shaft, Rustenburg, last month.

Miners allege Rankosane Ramokone (36) was killed by a white supervisor and his body put on the locomotive rails.

A spokesman for Johannesburg Consolidated Investments, Frans van Rensburg, said a post mortem by Dr. Michael Lutalo had shown death was caused by the accident.

But Lutalo said his examination had not extended to establishing whether the injuries were sustained while Ramokone was alive.
Miners killed

KIMBERLEY — Three diamond miners were killed in a freak accident at a diamond mine at Holpan near Winderton in the Northern Cape yesterday after the earth collapsed under them.
2 die, 21 hurt in fight at mine

JOHANNESBURG —
Two mineworkers were killed and 21 others injured in an apparent faction fight at the Beatrix Mine near Theunissen in the Free State on Thursday night, the mine management said yesterday.

One man was killed by a group of men about 9.30pm following a disagreement between two miners.

Sooner afterwards, a group of about 400 men, armed with sticks, knives and other weapons, killed another mineworker. The other miners were hurt in the ensuing fight. — Sapa
Weekly Mail Reporter

WORKERS at Richards Bay Minerals have not been exposed to dangerous levels of radioactive dust at the company's mining plant — despite fears that the company has produced minerals used in the atomic industry for many years.

A report by Mark Colvin, a doctor from the Industrial Health Unit at the University of Natal, notes that RBM regularly monitors the plant which produces radioactive monazite and that no major health hazards have been found.

However, he said International Labour Organisation guidelines state there is no safe limit for radioactive dust.

Workers have regular medical monitoring and are informed of any abnormalities that show up in their results. "It appears the company is doing the monitoring of radiation adequately," says Colvin's report.

According to company records, levels of radiation are within acceptable limits. The international and local current whole body standards are 50 millisieverts a year. No worker, in the last three years, has been exposed to more than 15 millisieverts.

But Colvin points out that workers in the plant remain suspicious of management's safety programme in the radioactive section of the RBM factory. After inspecting the plant last week, he suggested the company improve its relations with organised labour on occupational health issues.
Miner killed in clashes
THEUNISSEN — A mine worker was killed and nine others injured in renewed violence at the Beatrix gold mine near here.
Mine accidents

Rockfall and rockburst accidents in mines were continuing with no improvement despite extensive safety campaigns, the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs said in its annual report. Although the number of deaths on all mines had dropped from 604 in 1991 to 552 in 1992 — the year covered by the report — the death rate had climbed from 0.98 to 1.02 per 1000.

Total injuries had dropped from 9103 to 8801 over the same period, while the injury rate rose from 14.74 to 16.19 per 1000. — Sapa.
White workers back generals

The biggest white workers' union in the country, the Mineworkers Union (MWU), has been "flooded by calls to support the (former police and army) generals" who plan to mobilise the white right.

The MWU has 45 000 members on the mines and in key parastatals.

Media reports on a meeting of generals last week have yielded an unprecedented response from members, the union's media representative Stephan says.

LABOUR BRIEFS

White workers were growing more militant because of the "reverse discrimination" they were seeing at the workplace. "We believe in equal opportunities, not extra equal," he said.

Big pay demands on mines

The National Union of Mineworkers has tabled a wage demand for increases ranging between 20 and 25 percent on gold mines and between 40 and 90 percent on collieries.

The goal is an industry-wide minimum of R900 per month for surface workers and R1 000 a month for underground miners. Non-wage demands include calls for a social plan, which encompasses a number of benefits for retrenched workers and for an industry-wide adult basic education scheme. Industry negotiations get under way at the end of the month.
AN AIDS policy for the mines, which the NUM and Chamber of Mines have been negotiating for about 18 months, will probably be signed shortly, according to a union spokesman.

Both parties agreed they were “very close to agreement” on the issue, but had yet to resolve two points of contention.

One involves certain categories of workers the chamber insists should be tested automatically on medical grounds. The union maintains that automatic and pre-employment testing could be extended to all workers and is not acceptable.

Chamber medical adviser Dr Isaac Fourse saw this as “a procedural aspect” and said it was not a fundamental point. He said the parties had agreed employees had the right to refuse testing and were now thrashing out the extent of the agreement.

The second point is individual responsibility. The union is arguing for a lifestyle change, saying the hostel and migrant labour systems contribute to the spread of AIDS.

The chamber, however, says employees must accept responsibility for the spread of the disease as an individual is not going to become infected unless he has unprotected sex with an HIV-positive person.

Fourse said the two parties had gone a long way towards devising “broader guidelines to protect the rights of the HIV-positive worker in the mining industry.” The whites-only Mine Workers’ Union had been invited to discussions on the policy, but had “shown no enthusiasm.”

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Shoprite/Checkers warns against strike

SHOPRITE/Checkers on Friday gave notice to the SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers’ Union (Saccawu) that the union would be responsible for “whatever consequences may flow from strike action” planned to start this week.

In a hard-hitting letter to the union, group personnel manager Calie Burger said it was clear the union had a fixed intention to embark on strike action and would only abandon this when the company acceded to its demand for the unconditional reinstatement of the cancelled recognition agreement.

On Saturday, thousands of Saccawu members engaged in industrial action over the unilateral termination by management of its recognition agreement with Saccawu, the union said in a statement.

It said this followed a majority vote in favour of industrial action and the company not agreeing to mediation unless certain preconditions were met.

It said 14 workers were injured by police dogs after they had handed a memorandum to the management of Shoprite/Checkers in Hillbrow. A police spokesman said police had dispersed more than 200 workers because the march was illegal. He said one man was arrested.

In his letter, Burger said the company had given “proper and lawful notice” of the termination of the agreement which was “no longer appropriate to the structure of the new and enlarged company.”

Despite attempts, the union had been unwilling to negotiate a new agreement.

Burger said the company had requested a joint bargaining forum with the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers in accordance with “the prevailing national tendency to accommodate and tolerate minority groups” and to promote orderly collective bargaining.

This had been rejected by Saccawu whose “failure to deal with the issue had led to an indefinite delay in granting the annual wage increases.”

Burger said the two strike ballots conducted by Saccawu had “resulted in numerous incidents of illegal strike action, serious disruption to business and a large number of serious irregularities” and that any strike action embarked on would be deemed unlawful by the company.

Burger said as it was clear the union “is in an advanced stage of planning its industrial action and has devoted considerable time, energy and finance to this” the company would “take whatever practical steps it deems necessary to protect the interests of its employees, shareholders and the wider community.”

He said strike action would have a detrimental effect on the company’s financial recovery.
More bodies found as distraught families wait for news

A heavy toll over the years

Coal face disaster
Coalface disaster

Death mine..., morning breaks over Middelburg Colliery at Secunda, scene of a gas explosion that entombed 53 miners workers yesterday afternoon. So far 27 bodies have been recovered and there seems to be little hope of finding survivors. Picture Joao Silva.

More bodies found as distraught families wait for news

A heavy toll over the years

Mining disasters in South Africa have claimed the lives of tens of thousands of men. Between 1911 and 1990, 297,733 miners died, most of them in collisions, which are prone to explosions because of the high gas content of the air.

The advent of more sophisticated safety technology has not been able to prevent accidents.

Some of the worst mining disasters in recent times include:

- **1981** - 31 people died in a gold mine during a lift cage fall.
- **1987** - 65 people died at Klipspruit Colliery in a methane gas explosion.
- **1992** - 377 miners died at the Klipriviersberg gold mine in the eastern Transvaal when their equipment malfunctioned.
- **1997** - 25 miners died in a methane gas explosion at the garnet mine in Virginia.
- **1999** - 12 miners died in a shaft collapse at the Western Deep Levels mine.
- **2000** - 12 miners died in a methane gas explosion at the Eastern Transvaal.

These accidents have highlighted the ongoing struggle to ensure the safety of miners in South Africa's mining industry.

By Brendan Templeton and Peter Davies

A blood-red sun rose over a tense Secunda today, where distraught families waited for news of miners still missing after a methane gas explosion at Sao's Middelburg Colliery.

Fifty-three miners were listed as missing when a shaft collapsed at the eastern Transvaal mine. The miners were trapped underground for several days.

The rescue operation was hampered by the mine's complex ventilation system. The shaft had been sealed off, and rescue workers continued to search for any signs of life.

Security was tight at the mine entrance, with police and military personnel on duty.

Rescue attempts were disrupted by a methane gas explosion, which filled the mine with carbon monoxide and made the area unsafe for further operations.

The mine remains closed, and the search for survivors continues.
Six miners were injured in the fall.
Another miner earlier feared to have been trapped has been accounted for.
The injured, two of whom are in serious condition, are being treated in hospital.

Last night rescue teams continued their search for five still believed to be missing.
Five miners killed

RESCUB workers yesterday recovered another body of a miner killed in a rockfall at the VosLOOR gold mine near Orkney in the Western Transvaal.

This brings the death toll of the miners killed in the rockfall yesterday to five.

An Anglo-American Gold Division spokesman last night said at least four
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND POPULATION DEVELOPMENT

No. R. 795  
14 May 1993

DECLARATION OF A CONTROLLED MINE AND RISK WORK

I, Pieter Jozua Aucamp, Chief Director Forensic and Research Services, Department of National Health and Population Development, acting on behalf and by direction of the Minister of National Health, in terms of section 10 of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act, 1973 (Act No 78 of 1973), hereby declare the following mine to be a controlled mine with effect from 1 July 1993.

The mine known as Potgietersrust Platinums Limited, on the farms Sandslot 236 KR, Vaalkop 819 LR, Zwartfontein 818 LR and Overysel 815 LR, situated in the Magisterial District of Potgietersrus, Province of the Transvaal, which at present is worked by Potgietersrust Platinums Limited, Private Bag X2463, Potgietersrus, 0600.

I hereby, in terms of section 13 of the said Act, declare the following work at the said mine to be risk work with effect from the same date.

Excavations. Any work in underground or open workings.

On the surface. Any work—

(i) where the moving, transfer or handling of stone, rock, ore or other minerals takes place,

(ii) where the crushing, screening or classification of stone, rock, ore or other minerals takes place, except where this is carried out under water,

(iii) where pelletising is done,

(iv) at smelt-houses,

(v) on or at waste dumps, ore dumps or slimes dams, except where the materials are being deposited in the form of slime,

(vi) in drill-sharpening shops or at any other place where drills are sharpened,

(vii) in change-houses where persons performing risk work change their clothing,

(viii) in assay laboratories, except in separately ventilated parts thereof where only wet assays are done and no treatment of dry stone, rock, ore or other minerals takes place,

(ix) where samples of crushed ore or other minerals are graded in a dry state, and

(x) where rock-drilling is done.

Government Notice No 317 of 5 March 1993 is hereby withdrawn.

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DEPARTEMENT VAN NASIONALE GESONDHEID EN BEVOLKINGS-ONTWIKKELING

No. R. 795  
14 Mei 1993

VERKLARING TOT 'N BEHEERDE MYN EN RISIKOWERK

Ek, Pieter Jozua Aucamp, Hoofdredakteur Forensiese en Navorsingsdiens, Departement van Nasionale Gesondheid en Bevolkingsontwikkeling, handelende namens en in opdrag van die Minister van Nasionale Gesondheid, verklaar hierby kragtens artikel 10 van die Wet op Bedryfsekties in Myne en Bedrywe, 1973 (Wet No 78 van 1973), die volgende myn met ingang van 1 Julie 1993 tot 'n beheerde myn.


Kragtens artikel 13 van genoemde Wet verklaar ek hierby die volgende werk by genoemde myn met ingang van dieselfde datum tot risikowerk:

Utgewarende: Enige werk in ondergrondse of oop deltplekkie.

Bogronsde: Enige werk—

(i) waar die verskuwing, oorplasing of hantering van klip, rots, erts of ander minerale plaasvind,

(ii) waar die vergruiswing, af of klassifisering van klip, rots, erts of ander minerale plaasvind, uitgesonderd waar dit onder water gesked,

(iii) waar pelletising plaasvind;

(iv) by smeltrye,

(v) of by op afvalhope, ertslope of stikdamme, uitgesonderd waar die materiaal in die vorm van stik gestort word,

(vi) in boorslapynkels of by enge ander plek waar bore skerpmekaar word,

(vii) in kleedhuis waar persone wat risikowerk verm, huile verklee,

(viii) in essasierlaboratoriums, uitgesonderd in afsonderlik geventileerde dele daarvan waar slegs nat essasierings uitgevoer word en geen behandeling van droë klip, rots, erts of ander minerale plaasvind nie,

(ix) waar monsters van vergrusde erts of ander minerale in 'n droë toestand gegradeer word, en

(x) waar rotsboorwerk gedoen word.

Goe wernamtskennisgewing No 317 van 5 Maart 1993 word hierby herroep.
DECLARATION OF A CONTROLLED MINE AND RISK WORK

I, Pieter Jozua Aucamp, Chef Director Forensic and Research Services, Department of National Health and Population Development, acting on behalf and by direction of the Minister of National Health, in terms of section 10 of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act, 1973 (Act No 78 of 1973), hereby declare the following mine to be a controlled mine with effect from 1 July 1993:

The mine known as Rietvly Silica Myn, on the farm Rietvly Portion 98 and Rietvly Portion 90, situated in the Magisterial District of Rustenburg, Province of the Transvaal, which at present is worked by Rietvly Silica Myn, P O Box 1211, Rustenburg, 0300

I hereby, in terms of section 13 of the said Act, declare the following work at the said mine to be work with effect from the same date:

Excavations  Any work in underground or open workings.

On the surface  Any work—

(i) where the moving, transfer or handling of stone, rock, ore or other minerals takes place;

(ii) where the crushing, screening or classification of stone, rock, ore or other minerals takes place, except where this is carried out under water,

(iii) on or at waste dumps, ore dumps or slimes dams, except where the materials are being deposited in the form of slimes;

(iv) in drill-sharpening shops or at any other place where drills are sharpened,

(v) in change-houses where persons performing risk work change their clothing,

(vi) where samples of crushed ore or other minerals are graded in a dry state, and

(vii) where rock-drilling is done

Government Notice No 318 of 5 March 1993 is hereby withdrawn.

No. R. 796  14 May 1993

DECLARATION OF A CONTROLLED MINE AND RISK WORK

VERKLARING TOT 'N BEHEERDE MYN EN RISIKOWERK

Ek, Pieter Jozua Aucamp, Hoofdirekteur Forensiese en Navorsingsdienste, Departement van Nasionale Gesondheid en Bevolkingsontwikkeling, handelende namens en in opdrag van die Minister van Nasionale Gesondheid, verklaar hierby kragtens artikel 10 van die Wet op Bedryfsekte in Myne en Bedrywe, 1973 (Wet No 78 van 1973), die volgende myn met ingang van 1 Julie 1993 tot 'n beheerde myn:

Die myn bekend as Rietvly Silica Myn, op die plaas Rietvly Gedeelte 98 en Rietvly Gedeelte 90, geleë in die landdrosdistrik Rustenburg, provinsie Transvaal, wat tans deur Rietvly Silica Myn, Posbus 1211, Rustenburg, 0300, ontgin word

Kragtens artikel 13 van genoemde Wet verklaar ek hierby die volgende werk by genoemde myn met ingang van dieselfde datum tot risikowerk:

Uitgravings: Enige werk in ondergrondse of oop delfplekke

Bogrons: Enige werk—

(i) waar die verskuwing, oorplasing of hantering van kip, rots, erts of ander minerale plaasvind,

(ii) waar die vergruising, sko of klassifisering van kip, rots, erts of ander minerale plaasvind, uitgesonderd waar dit onder water geskied,

(iii) op of by afvalhoope, ertshoope of sildamme, uitgesonderd waar die materiaal in die vorm van silt gestort word,

(iv) in boordskipwinkels of by enige ander plek waar boere skerpemkaal word,

(v) in kleihoese waar persone wat risikowerk verg, hulle verklee,

(vi) waar monsters van vergrusde erts of ander minerale in 'n droë toestand gegradeer word, en

(vii) waar rotsboorwerk gedoen word

Goewermentskennisregew No 318 van 5 Maart 1993 word hierby herroep.

No. R. 796  14 Mei 1993

VERKLARING TOT 'N BEHEERDE MYN EN RISIKOWERK

Ek, Pieter Jozua Aucamp, Hoofdirekteur Forensiese en Navorsingsdienste, Departement van Nasionale Gesondheid en Bevolkingsontwikkeling, handelende namens en in opdrag van die Minister van Nasionale Gesondheid, verklaar hierby kragtens artikel 10 van die Wet op Bedryfsekte in Myne en Bedrywe, 1973 (Wet No 78 van 1973), die volgende myn met ingang van 1 Julie 1993 tot 'n beheerde myn:

Die myn bekend as Venetta Mine, op die plaas Venetta 103 MS, geleë in die landdrosdistrik Soutpansberg, provinsie Transvaal, wat tans deur De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd, Posbus 668, Messina, 0900, ontgin word
I hereby, in terms of section 13 of the said Act,
declare the following work at the said mine to be risk
work with effect from the same date.

Excavations Any work in underground or open
workings.

On the surface: Any work—

(i) where the moving, transfer or handling of
stone, rock, ore or other minerals takes
place,

(ii) where the crushing, screening or classification
of stone, rock, ore or other minerals
takes place, except where this is carried out
under water,

(iii) on or at waste dumps, ore dumps of slimes
dams, except where the materials are being
deposited in the form of slimes;

(iv) in drill-sharpening shops or at any other
place where drills are sharpened,

(v) in change-houses where persons performing
risk work change their clothing;

(vi) where samples of crushed ore or other minerals
are graded in a dry state, and

(vii) where rock-drilling is done

Government Notice No 316 of 5 March 1993 is
hereby withdrawn.

No. R. 798

14 May 1993

DECLARATION OF A CONTROLLED MINE AND
RISK WORK

I, Pieter Jozua Aucamp, Chef Director, Forensic and
Research Services, Department of National Health and
Population Development, acting on behalf and by
direction of the Minister of National Health, in terms of
section 10 of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and
Works Act, 1973 (Act No 76 of 1973), hereby declare
the following mine to be a controlled mine with effect
from 1 July 1993

The mine known as Macalman Colliery, on the
farm Macalman 15567, situated in the Magisterial
District of Klip River, Province of Natal, which is
present is worked by CBR Mining (Pty) Ltd, P O
Box 1007, Dundee, 3000.

I hereby, in terms of section 13 of the said Act,
declare the following work at the said mine to be risk
work with effect from the same date.

Excavations Any work in underground or open
workings.

On the surface: Any work—

(i) where the moving, transfer or handling of
stone, rock, coal or other minerals takes
place, including loading operations at subsidiary
sidings situated on the mining area,

(ii) where the crushing, screening or classification
of stone, rock, coal or other minerals
takes place, except where this is carried out
under water,

Kragtens artikel 13 van genoemde Wet verklaar ek
herby die volgende werk by genoemde myn met
ingang van dieselfde datum tot risikowerk

Utgrawings Enige werk in ondergrondse of oop
dellplekke

Bogronds Enige werk—

(i) waar die verskuwing, oorplasing of hantering
van klip, rots, steenkool of ander minerale plaas-
vind,

(ii) waar die vergrusning, sif of klassifisering van
klip, rots, erts of ander minerale plaasvind,
uitgesonderd waar dit onder water geskied,

(iii) op of by afvalhope, erts hope of sliktamme,
uitgesonderd waar die materiaal in die vorm
van slikt gestort word,

(iv) in boorslypwinkele of by enge ander plek
waar bore skerpemaakt word,

(v) in kleedhouse waar persone wat risikowerk
verm, hulle verklee;

(vi) waar monsters van vergrusde erts of ander
minerale in ‘n droe toestand gegradeer
word, en

(vii) waar rotsoorwerk gedoen word

Goewermentskennisgewing No 316 van 5 Maart
1993 word hereby herroep.

No. R. 798

14 Mei 1993

VERKLARING TOT ‘N BEHEERDE MYN EN
RISIKOWERK

Ek, Pieter Jozua Aucamp, Hoofdirekteur Forensiese
en Navorsingsdienste, Departement van Nasionale
Gesondheid en Bevolkingsontwikkeling, handelende
nemens en in opdrag van die Minister van Nasionale
Gesondheid, verklaar hereby kragtens artikel 10 van
die Wet op Bedryfsekte in Myne en Bedrywe, 1973
(Wet No 78 van 1973), die volgende myn met ingang
van 1 Julie 1993 tot ‘n beheerde myn.

Die myn bekend as Macalman Colliery, op die
plaas Macalman 15567, gelei in die landdros-
distrik Klipnveer, provinsie Natal, wat tans deur
CBR Mining (Pty) Ltd, Postbus 1007, Dundee,
3000, ontgin word

Kragtens artikel 13 van genoemde Wet verklaar ek
herby die volgende werk by genoemde myn met
ingang van dieselfde datum tot risikowerk

Utgrawings Enige werk in ondergrondse of oop
dellplekke

Bogronds Enige werk—

(i) waar die verskuwing, oorplasing of hantering
van klip, rots, steenkool of ander minerale plaas-
vind, sowel as laawerk by onderge-
skikte slyntse wat op die myngebied gelei is,

(ii) waar die vergrusning, sif of klassifisering van
klip, rots, steenkool of ander minerale plaas-
vind, uitgesonderd waar dit onder water
geskied;
(vi) op of by afvalhope, steenkoolhoop of siks-
damme, uitgesonderd waar die materiaal in
die vorm van siks gestort word,
(vii) in boorslipspinkleiks of by enge ander plek
waar boore skerpgemak word,
(viii) in kleedhuis waar persone wat risikowerk
verm, hulle verklek,
(ix) in steenkoolaboratoriums, uitgesonderd in
afsonderlik geventileerde dele daarvan waar
slegs nat ontlings uitgeoer word en geen
behandeling van droë klp, rots, steenkool of
ander minerale plaasvind n,
(x) waar monsters van vergrusse steenkool of
ander minerale en ’n droë toestand gegradeer
word, en
(xxi) waar rotsboomwerk gedoen word

Government Notice No 319 of 5 March 1993 is
hereby withdrawn

No. R. 799 14 May 1993
DECLARATION OF A CONTROLLED MINE AND
RISK WORK
I, Peter Jozua Aucamp, Chief Director Forensic and
Research Services, Department of National Health and
Population Development, acting on behalf and by
direction of the Minister of National Health, in terms of
section 10 of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and
Works Act, 1973 (Act No 78 of 1973), hereby declare
the followign mine to be a controlled mine with effect
from 1 July 1993

The mine known as Klipfontein Colliery, on the
farm Klipfontein 566 JR, Portion 6, situated in the
Magisterial District of Witbank, Province of the
Transvaal, which at present is worked by Klipfontein
Colliery, P.O. Box 83, Kendal, 2225

I hereby, in terms of section 13 of the said Act,
declare the following work at the said mine to be risk
work with effect from the same date.

Excavations Any work in underground or open
workings

On the surface Any work—

(i) where the moving, transfer or handling of
stone, rock, coal or other minerals takes
place, including loading operations at sub-
sidiary sidings situated on the mining area,

(ii) where the crushing, screening or classifica-
tion of stone, rock, coal or other minerals
takes place, except where this is carried out
under water,

(iii) on or at waste dumps, coal dumps or slimes
dams, except where the materials are being
deposited in the form of slimes,

(iv) in drill-sharpening shops or at any other
place where drills are sharpened,

(v) in change-houses where persons performing
risk work change their clothing.
DECLARATION OF A CONTROLLED MINE AND RISK WORK

I, Pieter Jozua Aucamp, Chief Director Forensics and Research Services, Department of National Health and Population Development, acting on behalf and by direction of the Minister of National Health, in terms of section 10 of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act, 1973 (Act No 78 of 1973), hereby declare the following mine to be a controlled mine with effect from 1 July 1993:

The mine known as Strip Mining CC, on the farm Chelmsford 87642, situated in the Magaliesberg District of Newcastle, Province of Natal, which at present is worked by Strip Mining CC, P.O. Box 3670, Durban, 4000,

I hereby, in terms of section 13 of the said Act, declare the following work at the said mine to be risk work with effect from the same date:

Excavations: Any work in underground or open workings.

On the surface: Any work——

(i) where the moving, transfer or handling of stone, rock, coal or other minerals takes place, including loading operations at subsidiary sidings situated on the mining area;
(ii) where the crushing, screening or classification of stone, rock, coal or other minerals takes place, except where this is carried out under water;
(iii) on or at waste dumps, coal dumps or slimes dams, except where the materials are being deposited in the form of slime;
(iv) in drill-sharpening shops or at any other place where drills are sharpened;
(v) in change-houses where persons performing risk work change their clothing;
(vi) in coal laboratories, except in separately ventilated parts thereof where only wet analyses are done and no treatment of dry stone, rock, coal or other minerals takes place;
(vii) where samples of crushed coal or other minerals are graded in a dry state; and
(viii) where rock-drilling is done.

Government Notice No. 320 of 5 March 1993 is hereby withdrawn.

No. R. 800

VERKLARING TOT 'N BEHEERDE MYN EN RISIKOWERK

Ek, Pieter Jozua Aucamp, Hoofdirekteur: Forensiese en navorsingsdienste, Departement van Nasionale Gesondheid en Bevordering van Ontwikkeling, handelende namens en in opdrag van die Minister van Nasionale Gesondheid, verklaar hierby kragtens artikel 10 van die Wet op Bedryfsvektors in Myne en Bedrywe, 1973 (Wet No. 78 van 1973), die volgende myn met ingang van 1 Julie 1993 tot 'n beheerde myn:

Die myn bekend as Strip Mining CC, op die plaas Chelmsford 87642, geleë in die landdros-district Newcastle, provinsie Natal, wat tans deur Strip Mining CC, Posbus 3670, Durban, 4000, ontgin word.

Kragtens artikel 13 van genoemde Wet verklaar ek hierby die volgende werk by gecentreerde myn met ingang van dieselfde datum tot risikowerk:

- Uitgrawings: Enige werk in ondergrondse of op grondplek.
- Bogronds: Enige werk——
  (i) waar die verskuiwing, oorplasing of hantering van klip, rots, steenkool of ander minerale plaasvind, sowel as laanwerk by ondergrondse syle wat op die mynegebied geleë is,
  (ii) waar die vergrijsing, sf of klassifisering van klip, rots, steenkool of ander minerale plaasvind en uitgesonderd waar dit onder water gesked;
  (iii) op of by afvalhoop, steenkoolhoop of slakdamme, uitgesonderd waar die matenaal in die vorm van slik gestort word;
  (iv) in boorslypwinkels of by enige ander plek waar bore skerpgemaa duplex word;
  (v) in kleedhuisje waar persone wat risikowerk verrig, hulle werkplek,
  (vi) in steenkoollaboratoriums, uitgesonderd in afsonderlike geventileerde dele daarvan waar slegs nat ontledings uitgeoor word en geen behandeling van droë klip, rots, steenkool of ander minerale plaasvind nie;
  (vii) waar monsters van vergrusde steenkool of ander minerale in 'n droë toestand gegradeer word, en
  (viii) waar rotsboorwerk gedoen word.

Government Notice No. 320 of 5 March 1993 is hereby withdrawn.
The bodies of 49 miners have been removed from the Middelburg Colliery disaster site to date. The incident, which occurred on Tuesday afternoon, claimed the lives of at least 49 workers. The cause of the explosion is under investigation. The mine has been closed indefinitely until the cause of the explosion is determined.
Families mourn victims of gas blast tragedy

SHIRLEY WOODGATE and CYRIL MADLALA

The methane gas blast at Sasol's Middelbout Colliery on Thursday had claimed 49 lives by late last night and mine officials said there was little hope of recovering the remaining four believed lost in the underground disaster.

The explosion, which hit sections 36 and 38 at the north shaft of the coal mine at Secunda was the second of its type at the 16-year Middelbout coal mine since 1985, when at least 33 miners lost their lives, a Sasol spokesman said yesterday.

Inspection

Thursday’s death toll was the highest in South Africa since 1987, when 62 miners died at St Helena gold mine near Welkom. Mine officials were yesterday unable to determine the cause of the explosion, but Sasol spokesman Richard Hughes said an inspection in loco would be held today.

By late last night mine officials had not been able to release the names of the dead or missing, especially those of the black miners.

E.2... the 'Saturday Star' found earlier yesterday that many of the miners who perished last, not only tears in the tight-knit Secunda community, but unfinished business at home. Young tradesman Casper Mienie will never see his first child, due to be delivered by caesarean section next week. His sorrowing widow will be admitted this weekend to a clinic to give birth alone.

Electrical mechanic Paul Nel, who would have been 46 on Wednesday, failed to pick up his wife Mari at the usual spot in the town at 4.30 pm on Thursday, and she had to walk home.

Vigil

His friend Chris Froneman (32), with whom he died 130 m below the surface of the coalfield when the gas ripped through the northern shaft, missed obtaining his Government ticket by one month after passing his N6 with distinctions.

Froneman, a father of four children, had worked for 10 years at Middelbout, said family friend Debbie Jordan, who was fielding non-stop phone calls at the house while the family slept, exhausted after their all-night vigil.

"He was an ambitious man who lived for his family," she said.

Mari Nel, supported by family and friends in her modest home, said her husband had briefly left the mine to work in Kempton Park, returning four years ago because the money was good and he loved his job but he always said he was scared.

Gas blast

FROM PAGE 1.

If the methane or electricity would kill him.

Still numb from shock, she related how she started phoning after arriving home, only to be told that sections 36 and 38 were out of order.

Then news started filtering through and at 7 pm she and the other women headed for the main shift to grieve.

The Coalminers Workers' Industrial Union has called on the Government to provide finance to improve the health and safety of miners in South Africa, in line with its decision to make funds available to finance security for white farmers.

In a statement, union spokesman Muzu Buthelezi said the National Occupational Safety Association's safety rating system was inadequate, as was demonstrated by awarding Sasol a top five-star rating two days before the disaster.

He confirmed that the union had as yet been unable to identify union members killed or missing in the explosion.

According to the National Union of Mineworkers 553 workers have been killed and 8 633 injured at South African mines this year.

TO PAGE 2.
Sasol blast: little hope left for missing four

JOHANNESBURG — The methane gas blast at Sasol's Middelburg Colliery on Thursday had claimed 49 lives by late last night and mine officials said there was little hope of recovering the remaining four believed lost in the underwater disaster.

The explosion which hit sections 36 and 38 at the north shaft of the coal mine in southeastern Transvaal was the second of its type at the 16-year Middelburg coal mine since 1965 when at least 33 miners lost their lives, a Sasol spokesman said yesterday.

Thursday's death toll was the highest in South Africa since 1967 when 62 miners died at St Helena gold mine near Welkom. Mine officials were yesterday unable to determine the cause of the explosion, but Sasol spokesman Richard Hughes said an inspection in loco would be held today.

The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union has called on the government to provide finance to improve the health and safety of miners in the same way as it has made funds available to finance security for white farmers — Sapa
Blast at colliery – union urges grassroots services

Staff Reporter

The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) of South Africa has called on its 45,000 members to hold nationwide commemorative services tomorrow to honour the 33 miners killed in a methane gas explosion at Middelburg Colliery, Secunda, last week.

The union's national executive committee has tabled a list of demands including:

- Trade unions and their members have a legitimate interest in negotiating health and safety issues.
- Workers must have the right to refuse to do unsafe work.
- An international commission of inquiry launched into South Africa’s workplace health and safety legislation.
- Government funding must be made available to raise health and safety standards.

A Middelburg disaster fund has been set up. Deposits can be made at Nedbank's Gale Street, Durban, branch – account number 1381-353738.
Star 5/15/93

‘Little chance’ miners alive

Rescue teams yesterday were hopeful of finding during the night, or today, one or more of three miners missing since an earth tremor shook the Buffelsfontein gold mine on Wednesday, according to a mine spokesman. Gengold spokesman Andrew Davidson said there was little chance of finding the men alive — Staff Reporter.
The agony of a community which lost 53 members on Thursday in the Middelburg Colliery disaster was very real.

"I saw several youngsters crying on the stoep of Oosterland High School," said Dutch Reformed Church dominee Rev Johan de la Guerre after the methane blast 150 metres below ground.

"There is so much pain and grief," he said after visiting bereaved families in Secunda, the south-eastern Transvaal town built around petroleum giant Sasol.

This was one of the worst accidents in South Africa's coal-mining history.

The Froneman family in Wagner Street are members of Mr de la Guerre's congregation and were in desperate need of comfort. Mr Chris Froneman, a fitter, failed to return home on Thursday night.

His widow, Bertha, was distraught, breaking down often and having to be comforted by friends and relatives who had gathered at her home.

"We were told to go to the mine and that there had been an accident. We had to wait while they looked for the missing men. We heard it had been a methane explosion," she said.

**Bewildered**

"At 5am on Friday, my husband's body was brought up," she said, her body heaving with sobs.

Her four children looked on, saddened and bewildered.

Mr Froneman's foreman, Mr Willie Koekeboom, tried to comfort the widow.

A bystander said "Willie lost four great pals in the explosion. My husband was so lucky. He changed his shift at the last moment."

If he had been there, he might have driven the community apart once more.

Grieving relatives of dead miner Mayenzeke Tshemi, a father of two and an underground truck driver, accused mine management of giving details of the tragedy to the media before they themselves had been informed.

They felt they should first have had the chance to identify the body in the morgue.

Chemical Workers Industrial Union spokesman Mr Buthelezi said "It is symptomatic of the general disregard for black miners in apartheid South Africa."

Mr Tshemi began working for Middelburg 12 years ago and at the time of his death earned R936 a month before deductions.

Senior mining official Jan Welz said it was not company policy to give families priority in identifying corpses at a time of disaster.

"We are going to investigate the allegations of the Tshemi family that they were refused entry to the mortuary to identify the body," Mr Welz said.

Middelburg colliery had
Winds of death blow over killer Secunda coalmine

By BERENG MTIMKULU

The cold wind chilled me to the bone.
It stank too – the overpowering stench of sulphur
blowing across the killer mine.
For this reporter it seemed to aptly symbolise the
reek of death which hung about in the wrecked,
smoking shafts below.
This was Secunda yesterday, scene of this week’s
mining disaster at the Sasol-owned Middelburg colliery.
In Embalenhle township – the mine’s source of
cheap black labour - the wind and the stink added to a
pervasive sense of dread among the people.
It was night and Nkosiyabo Thwane, 24, stood
framed in candlelight while her two children played
their games – oblivious to the tragedy which had
befallen them.

Explosions

Their father, Ntotoze, 30, was one of 33 miners
killed in the Middelburg mine explosions on Thursday
afternoon.
Nkosiyabo last saw her husband in the early hours of
Thursday morning when she bade him farewell as he
went to work.
On Friday morning mine officials arrived to inform
her of the dreadful news. They assured her his body
would be found.
When City Press knocked on her door, she asked
“Was his body found?” Her eyes had become shiny
with tears.
No.
“If only they could find him – at least”, she said,
breaking down.
In another emotion-choked scene Jerry Sindane was
whisked away from City Press reporters by white mine
officials.
They tried to console him.
Jerry had just heard the news that his brother Titus
was dead. He leaves his unemployed wife Thembezile
and their three-year-old son.
Titus worked at the mine for 10 years as an artisan
Miners warned officials about gas and heat

By BERENG MTIMKULU

SENIOR officials at the Secunda coal mine had been warned of possible danger days before the Middlebult shaft exploded, killing 53 miners, City Press was told this week.

An "operator" known as "Panyaza" reportedly fled the 130m-below-surface Section 36 and 38 ahead of Thursday's 2.30pm blast, fearing for his life. Mine security thwarted all attempts to speak to "Panyaza".

Distraught friends and relatives told City Press how, as early as Monday, their loved ones were reluctant to report for their usual 6am to 4pm shift after complaints of "increasing heat" down below were ignored.

A middle-aged miner, whose younger brother Thabang Moketsi is among the dead, said Thabang had told him they had noticed "gases and intense heat" by Monday afternoon.

These conditions, dubbed "imbhawula or skelm", impeded visibility, made breathing difficult and could have led to the explosion. The miner said that on Wednesday Thabang had told him they had embarked on an unnoticed go-slow and had informed white officials about their fears, but to no effect.

However, Sasol general manager Pieter Cox told journalists there had been no signs of methane gas accumulation where the blast occurred.

Asked about workers' allegations about intense heat and gases which they feared could explode, Sasol communications manager Jan Krynauw answered: "Sasol is unaware of complaints of intense heat made during the course of last week."

Two other miners said that during the Thursday shift concerns were again raised to officials as a few miners threatened not to report for duty.

See Page 4
Probe opens into mine blast

An investigation into the methane gas explosion which killed 33 miners at Sasol's Middelbult colliery, near Secunda, began on Saturday.

The investigating team is made up of mine management, the government mining engineer and officials of the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWTU).

Sasol spokesman Richard Hughes said yesterday investigations were expected to "take a while to complete".

Thursday's accident — the first involving methane gas since 1990, when 62 miners died at St Helens Gold Mine — has again raised the question of safety on the mines.

Statements from Constu and its affiliates said "drastic action was needed to end the carnage in our mining industry."

NUM health and safety chief San Jonas said 166 miners had died and 2,072 had been injured in accidents this year.

The NUM attributed this to safety issues remaining "management's prerogative" and workers' inability to refuse to do work they considered dangerous.

Changes to "archaic" legislation which regulated the mining industry were urgently needed to redress the problem, Jonas said.

He said these changes should be discussed at the commission of inquiry into health and safety conditions in the industry, as proposed by the union and agreed to by the Chamber of Mines.

However, government "continues to drag its feet" on the establishment of the commission, the union said.

A statement from Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister George Bartlett disputed Jonas's claim.

Bartlett said a commission had been appointed and would commence its investigations "soon".

A Chamber of Mines spokesman said stringent regulations concerning the monitoring of methane gas in coal mines were strictly enforced because of the " omnipresent danger" of a build-up of this highly flammable and odourless gas.

Sasol itself was a front-runner in keeping up with local and international safety developments, Hughes said.

He said Sasol was the first company in SA to install a surface barometric pressure monitoring system with a continuous telemetry system throughout the mine.

In addition, "all underground operators are equipped with methalarm and other continuous methane detection devises," he said.

Hughes said only two of Sasol's 49 sections at Secunda had been affected by the blast and disruption to production had been minimal.
Names of victims released

SASOL, which owns Middelbult Colliery where 53 miners lost their lives last Thursday, has released the names of 16 of the victims who died underground in a methane blast.


The names of the remaining victims will be released once their next of kin have been informed.
New call for probe on deaths at mines

Johannesburg — The National Union of Mineworkers has reiterated its proposal for a commission of investigation into health and safety in the mining industry following the death of 53 mineworkers at the Middlebult Colliery, Secunda, and five at the Vaal Reefs gold mine.

"The union's acting general secretary Ms Kate Phulp also challenged Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Mr George Barlett for having rejected the proposal "when both labour and the Chamber of Mines agree the need is there".

Diseases

Mineworkers were not only exposed to death and injury but also to extremes of noise, vibration, heat, repetitive task strain, chemicals and dust, she said in a statement.

The industry had a high level of occupational diseases like tuberculosis, pneumoconiosis, silicotics and obstructive airways disease (a kind of chronic bronchitis).

The Azanian People's Organisation on Saturday said it "deeply mourned" the death of all the mineworkers.

Sapa
Miners slam rejection of probe into safety

Staff Reporter

The National Union of Mineworkers has condemned a decision by the Government to overrule a request by the mining industry to appoint a commission of inquiry into mine safety.

NUM acting general-secretary Kari Philip said yesterday that Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister George Bartlett "either does not know what is going on or does not care".

This followed a joint request in December by the union and the Chamber of Mines that the inquiry be held.

"South Africa has the worst track record of safety in the world, and the last decade has seen the highest number of mining disasters in even our worst history," Philip said.

Other factors such as vibration, heat, chemicals and dust meant the industry had a high level of occupational diseases like tuberculosis, silicosis and pneumoconiosis.

Legislation governing compensation for these diseases still discriminated against black workers who were paid a lower levy than white workers. Black workers hit by these diseases also lost out on their pensions because they would be given a lump payment instead, she said.

The Minerals Act laid down no safety or health standards for the mining industry, and they were thus difficult to enforce. Workers needed to be allowed to have a say in the safety standards which directly affected them, Philip said.

"NUM challenges Bartlett to justify his response that there is 'insufficient evidence' of the need for an inquiry into health and safety in the mining industry when both labour and the Chamber of Mines agree the need is there."
Union and Sasol clash over mine safety levels

ERICA JANKOWITZ

A row over safety standards has erupted between the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) and Sasol, in the wake of the Midddelburg colliery accident, which claimed the lives of 53 miners on Thursday.

The union, which lost 30 members in the accident, said yesterday a similar incident, which resulted in 35 deaths at the same mine in 1989, had not been the subject of an inquiry. Had an inquiry been held in 1989 “maybe the 53 dead miners would still be alive today”.

The CWIU contended that Sasol had been prosecuted here and “found guilty on various charges”.

Sasol spokesman Jan Krynnauw said these allegations were “blatantly untrue”. In 1989 the attorney-general had decided in favour of a “full-blown inquiry” into the accident. Mine officials, including the mine manager, were prosecuted on charges of culpable homicide and contravening certain statutory safety regulations.

They were found not guilty of the first charge, but were found to have contravened certain safety regulations “not related to the accident”, Hugo said.

Sasol spokesman Jan Krynnauw said safety standards had been improved since the 1989 accident. All miners were issued with “methalarmas” in the form of cap lamps which flicker if methane is detected. Methanometers were also issued to “various mining personnel” for testing particular areas several times during a shift.

CWIU's Rod Crompton said the union had repeatedly requested mine management to issue all employees with methanometers, but to date only “miners”, who were generally white, carried them.

The local office of the Government Mining Engineer said the investigation would continue this week. It said the investigation would be followed by an inquest and a court case.

Crompton said the union had requested the simultaneous holding of the inquest and inquiry to speed up the process. The mining engineer said the Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister would make the final decision.

See Page 10
Another body found in gold mine hit by severe earth tremor

May 1993

The Argus Correspondent
and Sapa

JOHANNESBURG — Rescue teams today recovered the body of one of five miners who were trapped about 3km below ground after a severe earth tremor at the Buffelsfontein gold mine.

Gengold spokesman Mr Andrew Davidson said the dead man's body was found at 4am in an area just below 33 Level of the mine's Strathmore shaft.

The search for the other four men was continuing.

Mine general manager Mr Sean O'Connor said the rescue teams had opened up ground from 34 Level before finding their dead colleague. The other four trapped men were believed to be in two separate galleys.

Mr O'Connor said the teams were making good progress towards one of the areas, but were still separated by 50m of rock.

"But they have to break through about 80m of rock to reach the other galley."

"The rescuers have been working on continuous shifts since Wednesday morning. The chances of finding the other four men — two winch drivers, a machine operator and a team worker — alive appear bleak, but the Buffels underground team has not given up hope," said Mr O'Connor.

Rescuers found 11 miners on Wednesday. One of them died on the way to hospital, two were seriously injured and the other eight were unhurt.

The tremor, which measured 3.5 on the Richter scale, shook the shaft on Wednesday, causing a huge area of the working stope to collapse 2,922m underground.

Mr Davidson said the men went underground on the morning shift on Wednesday and set off for their allocated positions on the stopes.

Working from shift records and mine blueprints, rescuers had pinpointed where the miners should have been at the time the rock caved in.

Mr Davidson said the rescuers were mine captains, shift bosses and miners — all experienced and trained to deal with underground accidents.

He said the rescuers' progress varied with the strata of collapsed rock they had to tunnel through.

One metre could take as long to tunnel through as 20 metres, depending on the hardness of the rock, he said. And then they could pass one of the missing men by centimetres.

Gengold spokesman Mr Albert de Beer said in Johannesburg yesterday the western Transvaal was notorious for its seismic events because of its geology. Rockfalls sometimes followed the tremors.

"In most deep level mines like gold mines, a seismic event like this one is usually a horror story," he said.

This is the third fatal mining accident in a week.

Fifty-three miners died when a methane gas explosion ripped through Sasol's Middelburg Colby at Secunda last Thursday.

Five other miners were buried in a rockfall at an Anglo American mine near Orkney the same day.
DAY OF MOURNING FOR 53 MINERS

JOHANNESBURG — Secunda Collieries has declared today a day of mourning for the 53 victims of last week's mining disaster at Middelbult colliery.

Management said in a statement all underground operations at the colliery would be halted today to allow employees to attend memorial services.

Five additional services will be held at Sasol plants for employees unable to attend other services.

The 53 miners died in an underground methane gas explosion in one of South Africa's worst mining accidents — Sapa.
**Rightwing farmers seal off Natal town**

A GROUP OF MEN said to be radical rightwing farmers yesterday took over the Natal town of Harding, police and the ANC in the area said.

ANC member Dr Deva Moodley was chosen as spokesman for the Indian business community yesterday after 40 armed white farmers began visiting Indian-owned shops demanding that they close.

Moodley said the farmers had brought in extra help and at 10am began setting up barricades to prevent anyone from getting into the town or leaving until their demands were met.

He said the farmers decided to blockade the town because of a selective boycott called by the ANC against white-owned businesses.

The other reasons are alleged ANC intimidation of customers, that businesses were being used as political pawns and the "undemocratic" behaviour of the ANC.

The farmers, calling themselves the Harding Action Committee, are demanding that the ANC remove representatives from the Consultative Peace Forum.

The other two demands are that the ANC and its alliance compensate white businesses for losses incurred during the boycott and that the chairman of the ANC Harding branch, Mr Yunnus Khan, be fired immediately.

**Selective boycott**

Demand for ANC compensation for white businesses:

Moodley said the ANC was prepared to talk about having a representative on the Consultative Peace Forum but that the other two demands were rejected.

"Last night there was a meeting in the town which involved United Nations peacekeepers, the ANC, the Harding Action Committee, members of the white community and representatives of businesses. They decided that no action be taken today."

"However, the farmers decided on their wave of intimidation when they visited Indian-owned shops and demanded that they shut down."

"While they made their demands, they video-taped the response of the Indian businessmen," Moodley said.

He said some of the shops closed but others refused, which eventually led to the barricades being set up.

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**News in brief**

**Mourning dead miners**

SECUNDIA Collieries declared today a day of mourning for the 53 victims of last week's mining disaster at Sasol's Middelbult colliery.

Management said yesterday all underground operations at the colliery would be halted for the day to allow employees to attend memorial services in Secunda and eMbabeni in the Eastern Transvaal.

Five additional services would be held at various Sasol plants for employees unable to attend other services. The 53 mine workers died in an underground methane gas explosion, one of the worst mining disasters in recent years.

**R200 000 reward**

POLICE have offered a reward of R200 000 for information that will lead to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the attack in which three policemen and a policeman were killed in Dobsonville, Soweto, early this month.

Soweto police spokesman Major Joseph Ngobeni yesterday called on anyone with information to contact Major Fieldes Dempsey at (011) 980-7997 or the toll free number 0800 11 21 12. "Any information received will be treated confidentially," he said.

**Correct words**

IN a report on the Sowetan-Radio Metro Talkback Show last Friday, president of the Azanian Students Convention Mr Mark Mfikoe was quoted in Sowetan as having said "the political playing fields in Bophuthatswana have been levelled by Mangope's refusal to meet students' demands." Mfikoe has told Sowetan that his correct words were "to strive for free political activity in Bophuthatswana should be equated with the political tolerance of the repressive system that Bophuthatswana régime is because in essence, as the parameters of political activism widens so diminishes the room for political repression because political repression and liberation cannot exist in one room."

**Robber kills pal**

AN armed robber was accidentally shot dead by an accomplice in the Natal Midlands on Monday.

Police said yesterday two men entered the home of Mrs Norah Ngda in Mid-Ikhouvo and fired a shot which hit a third man keeping watch outside the house. The man was hit in the head and died instantly.
Unemployment ‘getting worse each month’

GERALD REILLY

In four months to end-November last year, the number employed in the mining and quarrying industries dropped by nearly 10,000 to 568,966, and in the construction industry by a huge 7,700 to 369,700.

The manufacturing industry, however, increased its workforce by 32,400 to 1,400,016.

A separate set of CSS statistics, covering the whole of 1992, showed that employment levels had also fallen in the wholesale, retail, hotel and motor trades.

Nearly 11,000 jobs were lost in re-tailing during the year and more than 3,000 in wholesale businesses.

The figures for the motor trade were down 1,500 to 115,100, and in the hotel trade by 2,400 to 89,700.

Pick ‘n Pay chairman Raymond Ackerman commented yesterday that conditions had never been tougher in the retail sector. The job loss trend was likely to continue, he said.

A glimmer of hope was that business confidence seemed to have strengthened, but consumer confidence had never been lower.

Only one development could restore consumer confidence and give the strapped economy the first real boost for three or more years. This was politicians agreeing to an election date and the formation of a transitional executive council. Until current negotiations achieved concrete results, the slide in the retail trade was likely to continue, he said.

Stellenbosch University’s economist and research bureau head Ockie Stuart said the increase in the number of workers in the manufacturing industry in the four months August to November could have been a seasonal hiccup which could be followed by a decline in the first quarter of this year.

However, the loss of 7,700 jobs in construction highlighted the severe depression in the building industry. This was unlikely to be relieved until well into 1994 and only then if violence subsided and real political progress was made, Stuart said.

Mine blast payouts explained

SASOL has had compensation for the families of the 33 miners killed in the methane gas blast at the Middelburg colliery on Thursday will be based on each worker’s income level.

Sasol spokesman Jan Krynauw said this week the company provided insurance for accidents, as well as group life assurance, pension and provided funds with special provisions in cases of accidental death an employees’ assistance fund and the government-administered Workers’ Compensation allowance.

In some cases up to seven times the individual’s annual salary could be paid to a miner’s dependents,” Krynauw said.

In the interim, Sasol would adopt a sympathetic approach to the families of victims as it would take some time for the question of compensation to be sorted out and paid, Krynauw said.

No family would be asked to leave company-assisted housing and each case would be handled individually.

Iscor sees windfall in Alusaf project

JON WATERS

ISCOR could earn R100m from the Alusaf smelter project which would require about 100,000 tons of steel.

The corporation has undertaken to offer steel at competitive prices to local contractors and construction companies for the project.

An industry source said Iscor sold hot rolled steel locally for R1.300/t compared with prices in Europe of R1,600/t.

Alusaf MD Rob Barbour said Alusaf would not favour local companies “We do, however, vigorously promote SA industry to all overseas companies with whom we deal”.

Alusaf wanted to maximise the SA content, but local bids had to be competitive. If a local bid was comparable to that of an international company, “then the local company will be selected”, he said.
IN BRIEF

(212)

Rescuers battle on

Johannesburg. — Rescue teams battling throughout the night failed to reach the five missing miners trapped after a smoke event at Gengold's Buffelsfontein gold mine in the Western Transvaal yesterday. Gengold spokesman Andrew Davidson said today the teams had a considerable amount of rock between them and the miners and Sapa.

[Signature]
5 miners sought after rockfall

Staff Reporter (212)

A rescue operation was continuing late last night at Gengold’s Buffelsfontein gold mine in the western Transvaal after a rockfall left one miner dead, 10 injured and five missing 3 km underground.

Gengold spokesman Andrew Davidson said the rockfall followed an earth tremor measuring 3.5 on the Richter scale which shook the area at 6:40 am.

The rockfall came just minutes after the morning shift had reached their work posts.

Davidson said 11 men were rescued after the rockfall at the mine’s Strathmore shaft almost 3 km underground, but one died on the way to hospital. Two of the survivors were seriously injured.

Rescue teams were working in shifts around the clock to search for the five men still missing, he said.

They are believed to be in an area of the mine which has totally collapsed.

Davidson said the earth tremor had caused a “huge burst of pressure” and the floor where the miners had been working had caved in.

This latest mining tragedy comes only six days after the methane gas explosion at Sasol’s Middelburg Colliery at Secunda, in which 53 miners died.

Five others died on the same day, in an accident at an Anglo-American mine near Orkney.
Miner dies in tremor

JOHANNESBURG - A man who was killed in an explosion at the Marikana mine has been identified as the son of a prominent local politician. The 23-year-old miner, who was working on the surface of the mine when the explosion occurred, was identified as Mpho Maseko by his father, who said he was shocked by the news.

'The explosion was a result of an electrical fault,' said Mpho's father, who added that his son had been working at the mine for three years. 'I'm devastated to lose him so young. He was a bright young man with a big future ahead of him.'

The mine is owned by the Anglo American Corporation of South Africa, which is currently involved in a labor dispute with the union representing the miners. The company has been criticized for its handling of the dispute, which has led to several deaths and injuries.

Miners and their families have been protesting for better working conditions and higher wages for several years. The recent deaths have led to increased tensions between the company and the union, and there are fears that the conflict could escalate further.

'We钺re trying to negotiate a fair settlement,' said a union representative. 'But the company is not willing to listen to our demands. We are determined to continue fighting for our rights.'

The union has called for a national day of mourning to be held in honor of the miners who have lost their lives in the dispute. The company has denied any wrongdoing and has said it is committed to providing a safe working environment for its employees.
Second: Could minds do more?

By Ferial Haffaee
Rescuers find body at 33-level

By Shirley Woodgate and Bronwyn Wilkinson

The body of one of the five miners missing after an earth tremor at Buffelsfontein gold mine on Wednesday, was recovered by rescue workers early this morning.

This brings the death toll in the rockfall at the western Transvaal mine to two, and Gengolds spokesman Andrew Davidson said although the chances of finding the other four missing miners alive were bleak, proto teams were searching round the clock for the men trapped about three kilometres below ground.

The dead team leader's body was located at 4 am in an area just below 33-level of the mine's Strathmore Shaft, close to where two men were rescued shortly after the cave-in two days ago.

Team finds miner's body at 33-level

*From Page 1*

Rescue teams, working from shift records and mine blueprints, had pinpointed where the men should have been at the time the rock caved in, said Davidson.

"The rescuers were mine captains, shift bosses and miners — all experienced and trained for underground accidents," he said.

Gengold's spokesman Albert de Beer said yesterday the western Transvaal was notorious for its seismic events because of its geology. Rockfalls sometimes followed the tremors.

"In most deep-level mines, like gold mines, a seismic event like this one is usually a horror story," he said.

This is the third fatal mining accident in a week. Fifty-three miners died when a methane gas explosion ripped through Sasol's Middelburg Colliery at Secunda last Thursday. Five other miners were buried in a rockfall at an Anglo American mine near Orkney the same day.
Frantic efforts to rescue trapped miners

A MINER was killed, five were injured and five others were still missing last night after a seismic event at the Buffelsfontein mine in the western Transvaal on Wednesday morning. Gengold spokesman Andrew Davidson said

The mine's rescue team, assisted by 30 volunteers (including shaft bosses and mine workers), were working around the clock to locate the trapped men, but the longer the operation took, "the more hope of finding them alive diminishes", he said.

Although the tremor measured only 3.5 on the Richter scale, it had resulted in extensive rockfalls underground and damage to the footwall. As the missing miners were trapped 2 840m underground, it could take rescue teams a long time to reach them as the area "had totally collapsed.

About 60m of rock separated the rescue team from the trapped miners.

The area was notorious for such events because of its geological formation, Davidson said. Other mines in the area, such as Vaal Reefs and Western Deeps, have had their share of such occurrences.

Davidson said the NUM was notified of the incident within hours of its occurrence and local union representatives had been down the shaft to see the area. They had also visited the injured miners in hospital.

At present the affected area was out of operation, but the stopes in which the 11 rescued miners were found had been made safe, Davidson said.

In the course of the past week 23 miners died in a methane gas explosion at Sasol's Middelburg colliery in Secunda, and five miners in a rockfall at Anglo's Vaal Reefs gold mine near Orkney.
Hope diminishes for missing miners

Own Correspondent

Johannesburg — Five miners are still missing after extensive rockfalls at the Buffelsfontein mine in the Western Transvaal on Wednesday morning killed one miner and injured five, Gengold spokesman Mr Andrew Davidson said yesterday. The mine's rescue team was working around the clock to locate the trapped men, but the longer the operation took "the more hope of finding them alive diminishes." A tremor measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale caused the rockfalls.

As the missing miners were trapped 2640m underground, it could take rescue teams a long time to reach them as the area "had totally collapsed." About 60m of rock separated the rescue team from the miners. In the course of the past week 38 miners died in a methane gas explosion at Sasol's Middelburg colliery in Secunda, and five miners in a rockfall at Anglo's Vaal Reefs gold mine.
5 Miners missing after rockfall

Workers trapped underground:

A MAJOR rescue operation was still under way yesterday at Gengold's Buffelsfontein gold mine in the Western Transvaal for five missing miners following a rockfall earlier in the day.

Sixteen miners were trapped after the tremor at the Struthmore Shaft at about 6.40am but 11 were later found.

One miner died on the way to hospital.

Rescue teams were unable to locate the other five men by sunset. — Sapa
Miner's body found

JOHANNESBURG. — Rescue teams yesterday morning recovered the body of one of the five mineworkers who were trapped about 3km below ground following a severe earth tremor at the Buffelsfontein gold mine on Wednesday.

Gengold spokesman Mr Andrew Davidson said yesterday morning the dead team leader's body was located at 4am in an area just below 33 Level of the mine's Strathmore Shift.

He added that the search and rescue operation was continuing for the other four men.

General manager Mr Sean O'Connor said the rescue teams had opened up ground from 34 Level before finding their dead colleague. The other four trapped men were believed to be in two separate galleries.

"The rescue workers have been working on continuous shifts since Wednesday morning and the new shift will go underground at 6am," he said.

— Sapa
The shivering mine
gives up another body

SHIRLEY WOODGATE
and BRONWYN WILKINSON
Weekend Argus Correspondents

JOHANNESBURG. — Another body of
one of the five miners missing after an
earth tremor at Buffelsfontein gold mine
on Wednesday has been recovered.

This brings the death toll in the rockfall at
the Western Transvaal mine to two and Gen-
gold spokesman Mr Andrew Davidson said al-
though the chances of finding the other four
missing miners alive was bleak, proto teams
were searching round the clock for the men
trapped about three kilometres below ground.

The dead man’s body was located at
4am yesterday in an area just
below 33 Level
of the mine’s Strathmore shaft,
close to where
two men were rescued shortly
after the cave-
in two days ago.

General manager Mr Sean
O’Connor said
the rescue team had opened up ground from
34 Level before finding their dead colleague.
The other four trapped men were believed to
be in two pairs about 40m apart.

Although the teams were making good pro-
gress towards one of the areas they still had
to break through 50m of rock, then work
through another 60m of rock.

One of the 11 miners brought out of the
mine on Wednesday died on the way to hospi-
tal, two were seriously injured and the other
eight were unhurt.

A seismic event measuring 3.5 on the Rich-
ter scale shook the vertical shaft at about
6.40am on Wednesday, causing a huge area of
the working stop to collapse 2922m under-
ground, Gengold said.

Rescue teams, working from shift records
and mine blueprints, had pinpointed where
the men should have been at the time the rock
caved in, said Mr Davidson.

The rescuers were mine captains, shift
bosses and miners—all experienced and
trained for underground accidents.

Gengold spokesman Mr Albert de Beer said
yesterday the western Transvaal was notori-
ous for seismic events because of its geology.

Rockfalls sometimes followed the tremors.

"In most deep-level mines, like gold mines,
a seismic event like this one is usually a hor-
ror story," he said.

It was the third fatal mining accident in a
week. Fifty-three miners died when a meth-
ane gas explosion ripped through Sasol’s Mid-
delbult colliery at Secunda last Thursday.
Five miners were buried in a rockfall at an
Anglo American mine near Orkney the same
day.
‘Hi-tech will stop mine disasters’

By DAN DHILAMINI

NUM blames mine bosses for the tragedy at Buffelsfontein, Vaal Reefs and Middelburg Colliery where more than 60 lives were lost in six days.

In an interview this week NUM media officer Jerry Majatladi told City Press it was discouraging that “preventable mine accidents” still claimed lives of workers in SA.

**Technology**

Majatladi, who this week returned from abroad where he attended seminars on mining safety, said the local mine bosses could introduce computerised technology which could detect potential dangers such as seismic pressure or high methane gas build-up.

He said the equipment was costly, but could effectively prevent loss of life and would increase production.

“The mining industry owners seem to be interested only in profit and neglect the safety and welfare of mine workers, who are mostly black. We have called upon the mining bosses and the government to establish an internationally recognised mining health and safety commission which would monitor mine safety, but we have not received any positive response,” said Majatladi.

Majatladi was responding to the most recent accident at Buffelsfontein where a seismic event (severe earth tremor) has so far claimed two lives with four men still missing, after 16 workers were trapped about 2,000 m underground at the Strathmore shaft near Stilfontein.

By Friday, four workers were still missing after rescue workers retrieved the body of a worker.

**‘Notorious’**

Responding to NUM’s allegations, Gengold spokesman Andrew Davison said an earth tremor was a natural phenomenon and the Western Transvaal was notorious for its seismic seizures.

Last Thursday 53 mine workers died at Sasol’s Middelburg Colliery when methane gas exploded underground, amid rumours that mine officials had been warned of the impending danger.

On the same day, five mine workers died following a rockfall at Vaal Reefs mine after being buried in a rockfall.
Another body found at mine

JOHANNESBURG — The body of one of the four remaining mineworkers trapped at the Buffelsfontein gold-mine in the western Transvaal was found yesterday afternoon, bringing the death toll to three.

The body was found more than 2,800m below the surface.

Rescue teams were continuing the search for the remaining three missing miners, but hopes of finding them alive were not good.

The miners were among a group of 16 trapped following a severe earth tremor at the Stretmore Shaft last Wednesday — Sapa.
Second miner found

JOHANNESBURG — Rescue teams yesterday recovered the body of the second of five miners missing after an earth tremor shook the Buffelsfontein gold mine early last Wednesday (Aug 22).

They recovered a body on Friday. With the find, the death toll rose to three. Rescuers believe there is little chance of finding any of the remaining three missing miners alive. — The Argus Correspondent
Second body found in mine

Rescue teams yesterday recovered the body of the second of five miners buried underground after an earth tremor shook the Buffelstein gold mine on Wednesday, bringing the death toll in the rockfall to three.

One man died shortly after the tremor, and the body of another miner was recovered on Friday. Ten others were unjured.

Rescuers said yesterday they believed there was little chance of finding the remaining three miners alive but the search, 3 km underground, would continue without pause.

—Staff Reporter
Miner dies in earth tremor

JOHANNESBURG — Management said a mineworker died and six were injured in an earth tremor at the St Helena gold mine in the Free State yesterday.

The mine is operated by Gencor Ltd's (Gengold division.

A spokesman said the group of miners were investigating damage following a tremor on Sunday measuring 3.5 on the Richter scale when another tremor struck measuring 1.8. The accident occurred 1,900 metres below surface at 2010 stope, the spokesman said.

With the recovery of the body of a miner killed in an earth tremor at the Buffelfontein mine last week, the death toll at the Klerksdorp mine has risen to six. — Sapa-Reuters
One killed, five hurt at Gengold's St Helena

ONE miner was killed and five injured after an earth tremor and rockfall at St Helena gold mine in the Free State on Monday, Gengold spokesman Albert de Beer said.

Meanwhile, the bodies of two of the missing miners at Gengold's Buffel-Fontein mine were found yesterday, bringing the death toll from the seismic event last week to five with one miner still missing, a mine spokesman said.

Neither incident was safety-related, De Beer said.
Last body brought up from rockfall mine

JOHANNESBURG.—The body of the last miner missing in the Buffelsfontein gold mine disaster has been found, bringing the final toll to six.

Rescuers, who had been working round the clock since a rockfall trapped 16 men nearly 3 km underground in the Strathmore shaft near Klerksdorp last week, found the machine operator in No 1 East gallery, a spokesman for mine-owner Gengold said. ARG 26/5/93 (2/2)

Bodies were recovered on Friday and Sunday, and on Tuesday morning and afternoon before the last missing man was found.

Of the 16 men trapped in the rockfall, 11 were rescued, but one died on his way to hospital, the mine spokesman said.
Survey predicts cut in Bank rate

THE odds favour a one percentage point cut in Bank rate by October, according to economists polled by SPL Treasury Services.

SPL said this should see the home loan rate dropping the same amount to 15% between July and October. Its worse case scenario was for the rate to remain unchanged, while its best case showed the rate coming down in June and continuing to fall to 14% by April next year.

However, while the sharp drop in home loan rates over the past 15 months seemed to be over, two more cuts in rates in the next 12 months were possible.

SPL said the overall downward trend in interest rates remained intact, although further movements in rates would be relatively small.

The uncertainty in the country was reflected by the big difference between the expected, high and low forecasts.

Longer-dated capital market rates were unlikely to decline much in the next 12 months. Any closing of the gap between long- and short-dated interest rates would be due to shorter-dated rates rising to meet the longer rates, which would remain flat.

Forecasts are gathered from a panel of economists and the figures are fed into SPL’s interest rate forecasting system.

Economists who took part in the survey were Louis Fourie (Boland Bank), Nick Bannardt (AHI), Ulrich Joubert (Transnet), Adriaan Jacobs (Absa), Dennis Dykes (UAL), Willem Marais (Johan Marais Brokers), Edie Lindeque (Ekonom) and Rudolf Gouwa (Rand Merchant Bank).

Mine safety ‘compromised’

SUPPLIERS of raw materials for specialised cement for the mining industry claim that imported cement from China is compromising mine safety.

Since the beginning of the year, mining houses have been using calcium sulphate alumina cement imported from China by Fosroc, which had established a joint venture with the Chinese for the export of the cement, said Fosroc chairman Anthony James.

This specialised cement maintains its strength in the humid conditions underground.

Pondarge MD Cecil Seymour, one of the suppliers of the specialised cement, said no long-term tests were conducted on the properties of the cement because of its recent introduction. But he claimed initial tests had indicated the cement induced corrosion in structures.

Another competitor who did not wish to be named claimed the sulphur content in the cement reacted with water and rusted steel. This had dire consequences for underground mining, which used the cement for rockbolt grouting to prevent rocks from collapsing.

James denied the cement compromised mine safety and said he was considering legal action against companies making such claims.

St Helena mine 'cautious' about gold price rise

WELKOM — Marginal St Helena Gold Mines said it needed sustained gold earnings of about R40 000/kg for at least six months to feel better.

"We're very cautious about the gold price and its current volatility," Gencor consulting mine engineer Peter Robinson told mine analysts.

The mine received R33 108/kg for April which includes undisclosed revenue from long-term forward sales positions. Current spot earnings would be about R38 000/kg.

St Helena is currently mining only its richest ore areas after massive down-scaled since 1989.

"We're at a point now where we can't rationalise more unless we close shafts," acting mine manager Jaap Storm said.

The workforce was reduced to 3 000 from 12 000 three years ago.

Robinson said sustained higher gold earnings of about R40 000/kg would allow the mine to re-enter the bulk of its ore reserves. That would entail much capital expenditure.

Last October the mine turned its focus on A-grade sections, such as the pillars in the worked-out areas of No 10 shaft which still have spectacular grades of 50 to 100g/ton.

St Helena also began using transvac suction units to recover gold dust that was washed into cracks in the carbonaceous rock of the No 10 shaft area — the first SA gold mine to use them in full production.

Officials said the contributions by the giant vacuum cleaners had significantly reduced losses.

Robinson said the mine aimed to cut current costs of R25 000/kg to R22 000/kg by using transvac units, and by cross-training workers for a variety of jobs to improve productivity.

St Helena was still operating well below capacity, with 63 000 tons a month being mined from its peak of 240 000 tons 10 years ago.

However, current gold production of 290kg a month was expected to rise to 520kg, even if B-grade areas were not re-opened, he said.

The mine has applied for government permission to work seven days a week — Reuters
Mine safety inquiry gets nod

CAPE TOWN — The Cabinet has approved of a commission of inquiry to look into improving mine safety.

This was announced in Parliament today by George Bartlett, Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, in his budget debate.

Bartlett said the number of fatalities in the industry had fallen from 694 in 1991 to 552 in 1992 while injuries dropped from 9,103 to 8,801.

The commission would study existing regulations on safety and health in the mining industry, including compensation paid for injury and illness.

— Political Staff.
Dug his mate out with his hands

By DAN DHLAMINI

"PRAYER is powerful and God is great!" These were the words of a survivor of the Buffelsfontein rockfall this week.

The fall at GenGold’s goldmine killed six miners and hospitalised five.

Sixteen miners were trapped 2 km underground when part of the Strathmore shaft caved in.

Speaking from hospital where he is being treated for injuries to his legs and arms, Fozile Tshaka said he had given up hope. While trapped, heavy rocks had continued to fall all around him.

The 39-year-old Lusikini man said: "I prayed to God to accept me as I became weaker and weaker."

He had crept into a crevice "where rocks were not falling."

Then he heard a man coughing and he recalled that Mahamba Malima had been walking behind him.

He had started digging with his hands until he found Malima and dragged him into the crevice.

Malima, who sustained head injuries, said he too had given up hope. Rocks had dropped "like bombs" around him.

"I was bleeding and had lost my lamp and oxygen mask and the heat was tremendous. I thought it was all over."

The pair had sat "debating" whether to scream to alert the rescue workers.

Malima had feared the rescue workers’ efforts would "endanger" them.

"But I lost the debate and we screamed and were taken to safety."
Commission to probe mining safety

CAPE TOWN — Government has appointed a commission of inquiry into safety, health and compensation in the mining industry because of concerns raised by the Mining Industry Summit representing the Chamber of Mines and mineworkers' unions.

The commission will make recommendations to President F W de Klerk on improvements to, and implementation of, legislation already in existence.

Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister George Bartlett announced on Friday that the commission would investigate all aspects of the legal regulation of safety and health in the mining industry, including compensation for injury, illness and death.

The inquiry’s frame of reference excluded the principles contained in the Workmen’s Compensation Act and proposed in a draft Bill on the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases. The commission would consist of a chairman and two assessors.
17 Vaal miners missing

Staff Reporter

RESCUE teams are searching for 17 miners, missing in rockfalls following four seismic events at Vaal Reefs' No 4 Shaft near Orkney early today.

According to Anglo American Corporation's Gold and Uranium Division, the missing men are believed to be trapped in three separate locations about 2,000 metres below the surface.

One worker was injured in the rockfalls and is in a satisfactory condition in hospital.

The incident is the fourth in a spate of accidents on South African mines, following closely on the disaster last week at Gengold's Buffelsfontein gold mine when a rockfall trapped 16 miners nearly 3km underground, killing six of them.

Five miners were buried in a rockfall at a Vaal Reefs mine near Orkney on the same day. Two weeks ago, 53 miners died when a methane gas explosion ripped through Sasol's Middlebult colliery at Secunda.

In a statement, Anglo said it believed that 11 miners were in one location on 68 level and one in another. The other five were thought to be in a conveyor belt incline running between 64 and 68 levels.

The first seismic event, measured 4 on the Richter Scale.
Rescue teams bring 16 miners to safety

Five rescue teams who worked around the clock from midnight on Tuesday had, by late yesterday, brought to the surface 16 of the 18 miners trapped underground at Vaal Reefs gold mine near Orkney.

One fatality was reported in the incident which occurred after four strong seismic events shook the area in quick succession.

Two miners were injured in the rockfall and one was still underground, but contact had been made with him and he was not injured, Anglo-American spokesman James Duncan said yesterday. (2.12.12.)

He said the missing miner was about 3,000m underground, but the rescue teams had a good idea of where to find him.

Duncan said a great deal of time and money had been spent upgrading support at the stope faces at Vaal Reefs and this had paid off as there was only one fatality despite the severity of the four tremors and the extent of underground damage.

NUM assistant general secretary Marcel Goldberg said even with the additional support at the mine, management still was not taking sufficient precautions to prevent this type of accident.

He said recent studies on backfilling had shown this did not provide adequate support in areas where earth tremors were common.
Mine safety inquiry

THE NUM yesterday welcomed the appointment of a commission of inquiry into the legal regulation of mining health and safety. It said it was unfortunate that the inquiry was commissioned only after a major mining disaster and that the chairman would be appointed by Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister George Bartlett without consulting employers and unions.
15 trapped
miners safe, one missing

ORKNEY — Fifteen of the 17 miners trapped 2 000
metres below surface at Vaal Reefs gold mine have
been found alive and unharmed.

One miner was killed and a second is still missing
at the Vaal Reefs No 4 shaft near Orkney, Western
Transvaal. The mine reported four tremors on Tues-
day night and yesterday morning.

Anglo American Corporation spokesman Mr
James Duncan said one of the 15 was slightly in-
jured. The search for the missing miner is con-
continuing.

The first and heaviest tremor, measuring four on
the Richter Scale, occurred at 11 05pm on Tuesday,
and the fourth, measuring 3.1, at 5 52am yesterday.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has
claimed the appointment of a commission of inquiry
into the legal regulation of occupational health and
safety in the mining industry as a major victory. It
said yesterday it had been calling for such a com-
mission since the Hlobane colliery disaster in 1983.

"It is tragic that it should take another major
mining accident like the Middelburg disaster, which
claimed more than 50 lives, for the government to
take this step," NUM said.

The union also said it welcomed the statement by
Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs Mr George
Bartlett that assessors would be appointed in con-
sultation with key members of the mining industry,
but it objected to the fact that Mr Bartlett did not
propose consultation over the appointment of the
chairman of the commission — Sapa
Speed up talks, urges Cosatu

Federation calls for setting of an election date:

ALL South Africans should take action to ensure speedy progress at multiparty talks, Congress of South African Trade Unions spokesman Mr Neil Coleman urged yesterday.

In a statement issued yesterday, Coleman said all civil society organisations should decide on the action that should be taken if the negotiation council did not decide on an election date by today.

“The planning committee should recognise the urgency of the situation by bringing the meeting date of the broader negotiations forward from June 25.”

“The negotiations forum needs to, as a matter of urgency, agree on a package which will include the question of the transitional executive council, constitutional principles and the functioning of the constituent assembly,” he said.

Formal or informal

Asked to elaborate on the action that would be taken, Coleman said it could be formal or informal.

This, he said, would depend on a consultation between civil society and other interested organisations.

He further urged non-political groups to participate or follow their own programmes of action. "Stop.

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News in brief

Johnny in court

MR JOHNNY Mokaleng, the man who alleged that police murdered and buried political detainees in graves in the Western Transvaal, has appeared in court.

He claims in January sent police on a grave-digging expedition through the Western Transvaal and Bophuthatswana but the widely published excavations revealed no bodies. Mokaleng (29) appeared before Rustenburg Regional Court magistrate Mr AF Snyman yesterday. No charges were put to him and the case was postponed to June 15. Bail was set at R1 000.

Croc shoker

A ZIMBABWEAN policeman traveling on the back of a police truck with an apparently dead crocodile got the shock of his life when the reptile suddenly lurked at him.

The policeman had been knocked unconscious by village men after a fight with a group of children on a riverbank in central Zimbabwe. The police were called, pronounced the 2.5-metre beast dead and loaded it into their truck. One of the officers hopped in the back with it. He was next heard screaming for help as the crocodile chased him around the moving truck. Colleagues stopped the vehicle and shot the reptile.
Miner's body recovered

The body of the remaining miner worker trapped underground at Vaal Reefs No 4 Shaft after four earth tremors on Tuesday night and Wednesday morning was recovered by rescuers yesterday. A mine spokesman said all missing employees had now been accounted for. — Sapa.
News in
Sawelwa 41/6/93
Trapped miner dead

The remaining miner trapped underground after a rockfall at Vaal Reeds gold mine, near Orkney, is dead, Anglo American announced yesterday (21/2).

Rescue workers are still trying to recover his body. This brings to two the number of workers who died in the rockfall, caused by four separate occurrences on Tuesday night and early on Wednesday. Sixteen miners were brought to safety on Wednesday during a rescue operation.
Wheels back on at Saambou

THE first thing Johan Myburgh noticed when he joined Saambou two years ago was that it was losing money.

The chief executive says: "I thought I should do something about it." After 1992's attributable loss of R68.8-million it was with pleasure that Mr Myburgh could report a profit of R125-million for the year to March this year — and restoration of a five-times covered dividend of 2c.

The share price rose since last year's low of 65c illustrates the reviving fortunes. It is now 94c and if Saambou can justify a forward rating of about 10 times earnings, the price could go to 150c.

Focus

Mr Myburgh told members of the Investment Analyst Society in Johannesburg this week that 1994's earnings would be between 15c and 17.5c a share.

Two years ago Saambou was burdened with poor properties. It lacked focus, competence, computer systems, even customers.

Mr Myburgh says: "Lots of savers have been put off by smaller banks because of the collapse of Cape Investment Bank and Masterbond.

Saambou's advertising since he took over has been aimed at depositors — he believes borrowers will keep coming anyway.

The percentage of the bank's funding from individuals has climbed from 28% to 38%. The early target was 40%, but Mr Myburgh now aims for 50%.

The bank's intention is to provide low-cost financial services to salaried individuals and pensioners.

Mr Myburgh says higher margin businesses, such as personal loans, will be sought.

Saambou needs to achieve a return on equity of 35.4% to provide its own capital. The key will be to reduce operating expenses — R18-million in 1993 and R13-million in the past year. But Mr Myburgh is aiming for R12-million on the same asset base.

He says benefits will flow from the two-stage rationalisation now complete and from new systems. Computerisation has been outsourced to SPL. IT — 204 Saambou — must control these costs.

The capital position is not critical. Primary capital of R140-million is 5.3% and secondary capital of R71-million another 1.1%, giving a sub-total of 6.4% against the 8% international target by the year end. Surplus capital in the group, such as R48-million of tax losses, takes the ratio to 9%.

Saambou also aims to do something about the properties which caused R48.3-million of grief in 1992. Instead will no longer be capitalised now that the cost of the properties can be carried by Saambou.

Mr Myburgh says the allowance with largest shareholder Fedure provides shareholder comfort and a means of securing capital through loans or debentures until the Saambou share price is adequate to stand a rights issue.

Scrip

In the 1993 year, Saambou was obliged to write off R36-million and provide R45-million, taking total provisions to R394-million, or 2.6% of assets.

Mr Myburgh says that since tax loss has been used, earnings will drop. The effect is being smoothed by setting up a general provision. Last year it was R6-million, about a third of the total otherwise attributable. The dividend will be covered five times and scrip will not be an alternative until the share rating is stronger.

Miners seeking treasure under a turkey

I HEAR that Gold Fields of SA is considering development of a mine at Kalkoenkranz (turkey kraal) in the Free State.

What would be different about it is that the likelihood of a mineral-rights swap between GFS and Anglo American Corporation. Neither will commit, but I am told that GFS is keen to trade its mineral rights at Weigelten — where Anglo has a large holding — for Anglo's holdings at Kalkoenkranz.

The reserves at Kalkoenkranz are believed to be 37-million ounces of gold; about the same as at Beatrix and of much better grade than Oryx's Lydex, a listed mining exploration company. GFS could benefit from a green light at Kalkoenkranz. It has participation rights in the area.

But I must stress that it is early days. GFS is not known for hedging gold production, and would likely want a higher and less volatile gold price before any development.
Cutback at Delmas colliery

By Derek Tommey

Working losses have forced Trans-Natal's Delmas colliery to switch to single-shift operations, a move that is expected to affect more than 450 workers, the company has announced.

As alternative employment opportunities are being investigated, the mine is not yet in a position to say exactly how many employees will have to be retrenched.

Production is being cut by 23 percent in a bid to restore the mine to profitability.

Trans-Natal's managing director, Dave Murray, says that constructive suggestions by the workforce, the unions and associations have enabled the mine to limit to 23 percent the cutback in production.
Jack Curtis, a mining engineer since 1935 who is now retired, takes a concerned look at rockbursts and their effect on the safety of miners in light of the recent mining disaster which was caused by this phenomenon:

Miners ... face great risks

“rockbursts and falls of ground”, which had stood at 1,2 per 1,000 per annum of “person in service” in 1906, had been reduced to 0,7 per 1,000. Although during the same period fatalities from “all causes” which had been 4,9 per 1,000 in 1906 had dropped to 1,75 per 1,000 in 1939 and have now settled at around 1,0 per 1,000 since 1960 to date, there has been no sustained improvement in the rate of fatalities from “rockbursts and falls of rock” (RAFOR), which have remained at about 0,7 per 1,000.

Whereas above ground accidents from traffic, the handling of materials and machinery and bodily falls are controllable by the persons involved, this is not the case in RAFOR, which arise from the design of the mining structure (excavation) and the specification of the system of support of reinforcement, both of which are the responsibility of management.

During the last 30 years the responsibility for this function has been more and more shifted away from “line” management, to staff (rock-mechanics) departments concerned with research into “seismic” phenomena and theorising on the possibility of predicting rockbursts in advance of their occurrence, rather than improving methods for alleviating their effect.

The result is that the supervisory and management staff are not, and in the nature of their responsibilities, cannot be held accountable for what they do not have control over.

For their part, both the research and advisory divisions of the “rock-mechanics” divisions, efforts are concentrated on shifting the blame for their lack of success on to the nature of the medium—the virgin rock—and depcting the earth tremors (seismic events) as causes of, and not the effects of, the mining operations.

It is like a child blaming the collapse of his castle on the nature of the sand, rather than adapting his building operations to it.

It is symptomatic of this tendency to “disinformation” that a contribution made by the writer—to a paper read before the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, “Seismicity associated with deep level mining at Western Deep Levels Limited” by WA Lenhardt—and forwarded on July 28 1992, has, unlike other contributions, neither been acknowledged nor published. In the contribution the writer concluded to “attribute the inability to reduce the disruption to operations (by rockbursts) to seismic events outside the control of mining engineers does not augur well for present, let alone deeper mining operations”.

It is a conclusion of deep relevance to operations in deep level gold mines.
NEW SUPPORTS IMPROVE MINE SAFETY

ZIMBABWE GOVERNMENT FORECASTS 10% GROWTH

In this year’s ‘97 growth forecast, the Government of Zimbabwe has forecast a 10% growth in GDP, driven by a resurgence in the mining sector. This is expected to be supported by an increase in agricultural output, industrial production, and export earnings.

The mining sector, which accounts for a significant portion of the country’s GDP, is expected to continue its strong performance, with gold and platinum being key drivers. The government is also targeting increased investment in mining to boost production and increase the country’s competitive edge in the global market.

ZIMBABWE—A HANDBOOK FOR TRAVELLERS

A handbook is available for travellers to Zimbabwe, offering information on safety, health, and cultural norms. It is recommended for all visitors to the country.

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Draft legislation now before Parliament could change the way that miners, who have been compensated for lung diseases in South Africa, are compensated, dramatically raising the bills of thousands of miners each year. Health Writer DAVID ROBBINS reports

By attempting to decriminalize the law governing compensation for lung diseases without adequately covering the overall cost of compensation, the state has sparked a debate about the adequacy of compensation, which will have far-reaching consequences.

The central question is: Is tuberculosis an occupational disease in miners or not?

It is always been known that thousands of miners with TB have been compensated over the decades in terms of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act (ODIMA). But the Act ensures that white miners have been entitled to 10 times more compensation than their black counterparts.

This is based on the discriminatory law as at last being overturned. According to the 1966 Amendment Bill before Parliament, parity of compensation is set at two-thirds the old white rate.

At the same time, tuberculosis is broken down into curable and incurable categories, with the latter only qualifying for compensation.

There are dozens of voices.

"There is no medical evidence to support the contention that TB is curable," says the medical director of industrial workers' unions (NUM). "On the contrary, developments in the disease, the progress of which can be arrested only through medical treatment and, in appropriate cases, in working and living conditions." It rationalizes for this alteration in the status of TB appears to many to be economic. The mining houses (via penalties for excessive dust levels at individual mines) and the State jointly finance the compensation system, which, at the moment, costs between R10 million and R15 million a year.

NUM researchers have calculated that the cost of lump sum compensation payouts would be at least R50 million more, and that if patients were given free anti-tuberculosis drugs and five years. The researchers conclude that the Compensation Fund for Occupational Diseases is a chronically short of money. This is an unmeetable debt that has to be rectified.

In view of all this, the status of TB on the mine becomes political. Can it be compensated or not? What are the medical arguments?

There's no doubt that silicosis, particularly in the gold mines, leads directly to the development of silicosis, and that silicosis can lead to TB. What TB is a common occurrence of miners who have not got silicosis.

There were more than 400 of them diagnosed during 1982 and they received more than 90 per cent of the compensation payouts.

The case against TB as a disease-related disease goes something like this. The miners alone cannot be held responsible for the high incidence of silicosis among miners. Although TB is a complication of severe silicosis, silicosis does not cause TB and should therefore not be considered an occupational disease.

This argument is strengthened by evidence. First, South Africa is the only country in the world to compensate for TB in miners. Second, experiments conducted by Robert Coetsee on the Free State goldfields in the 1890s showed that it was not necessary to keep miners with silicosis on the surface. Refitting infected miners underground within a month after working underground made no difference to their lung rate.

The third prong of the argument concerns the incidence of disease beyond the mines. Although the rate of TB among the miners (100/100,000 in 1969) is nearly five times higher than in South Africa generally, the mining houses have several explanations for this: One is that silicosis causes silicosis, they argue, is that a superior surveillance and reporting system exists in the mines.

Other causes are persuasively expressed by Coetsee:

"The major stumbling block in the control of TB in gold mines is the inability to influence the large infective pool (of TB carriers) that is known to exist in the remote areas of this working population." He cites and the migratory labour system makes that the TB farmers into the mines.

The NUM says that according to figures from the Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases, the average time it takes a miner to contract TB is around 10 years of work (invariably underground). While the average number of cases among silicotics, of which TB is often a complication, is 16 to 17 years.

The relationship between silicosis and TB is medically established. It is the relationship between silicosis and TB that is still under debate. While some argue that rural conditions and migrant labour account for the high incidence of TB among miners who have not yet developed silicosis, the union says that dust is at least partially the cause. There are also the high stress levels associated with mining, and the overcrowding in the huts, but dust is considered the main culprit.

Compare, for example, the TB rates of white miners without silicosis to white rates in general, and in particular to adult males. Under-reporting in the white population is far less likely and less prevalent than among the South African's millions of rural blacks. Nevertheless, while miners are also showing an incidence that is five times higher than their counterparts in the general population.

Now take the rates for various mining jobs. Drillers would be among those most subject to silica dust, whereas surface workers would be least subject.

In recent tests, drillers weighed in with a TB rate of 10/100,000, while no category of surface worker exceeded 6/100,000.

All this is in line with evidence from Europe. A long-term study on foundry workers in Denmark established that the increased TB risk associated with silica exposure may cause increased pulmonary TB risk among foundry workers not suffering from silicosis.

How much silica dust are South African gold miners subjected to? In terms of the old Mines and Works Act, the legal maximum was more than ten times higher than the international standard.

The new Mines Act adheres to the international standard but leaves it up to companies to negotiate codes of practice with mining inspectors, with miners consulted. In spite of considerable secrecy surrounding dust levels data, it is known that levels are still high in spite of all improvements. In 1980, as many as 10,000 miners were working in dust levels 10 times the international limit. By the end of the 1980s, this number had dropped to just below 7,000.

Mining — especially gold mining — has been the mainstay of the South African economy since gold was discovered by the Dutch 300 years ago.

While the compensation argument rages, the miners will continue to produce both wealth for the country and risk for the men who work in mining.
New TB legislation will hit miners

By David Robbins, Health Writer

As South Africa braces for a tuberculosis explosion, the Government has introduced legislation which, if passed by Parliament, will affect the lives of thousands of gold miners suffering from the disease. Amendments to the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act could change the status of tuberculosis, and end the payment of compensation to miners who develop TB.

Santå's director of community TB education, Dr Theo Collins, said there was no doubt that releasing tubercular miners into mostly rural homes had done a great deal to perpetuate the disease in southern Africa.

Under current legislation, black miners are compensated at a rate of one-tenth of that paid to whites. The new legislation attempts to correct this imbalance, but at the expense of compensating for what the new Bill calls “curable” TB. Also, there is generally no provision for treatment after men have left the employment of the mines.

This means that thousands of ill miners could return to their homes each year with neither the meagre compensation currently paid nor any continuing treatment. “This won’t help the situation,” Collins said. “The reality is that the disease is on the increase, especially multiple drug-resistant TB.”

Draft legislation sparks TB debate — Page 7
Short-term action for economy

The National Economic Forum (NEF) this week approved recommendations for short-term economic action — including protecting collective bargaining and job creation through public works programmes.

At its first plenary session since its establishment last October, the NEF, comprising organised business, government and labour, also voiced its intention to secure a partnership role with the government of the day in setting economic policy.

Finance Minister Mr Derek Keys emphasised the need to create an economy that answered more closely to the needs of the community.

Centralised bargaining was acknowledged as “one of the tiers” of the collective bargaining system.

Miners reject CoM pay offer

The National Union of Mineworkers (Num) has rejected a final pay offer by the Chamber of Mines, and unions affiliated to the Council of Mining Trade Unions have declared a dispute and applied for a conciliation board hearing.

Num said gold mines had offered pay increases ranging from six to eight percent.

The offer was rejected because the higher gold price provided the mining industry with additional profit of R200 million a month, and workers had made big sacrifices in recent years by accepting increases far below the inflation rate, resulting in low living standards.

Footwear workers down tools

Thousands of footwear workers in the Western Cape have downed tools following the breakdown of wage negotiations, according to the SA Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union.

Union organiser Mr Ronald Bernard said about 3,000 workers went on strike yesterday because they were unhappy about the wage offer from manufacturers.

Footwear Manufacturers Federation director Mr Dennis Lunde confirmed the deadlock.

Toy firm locks out workforce

Educational toy manufacturers Playthings has locked out members of its workforce in Epping after they refused to accept a final wage offer and negotiations ended in deadlock.

Company director Mr Steve Knight said Playthings offered a final wage offer of R18 a week increase, but when the talks deadlocked the union was demanding R47 across-the-board.

Public servants slam “decrease”

The Public Service League this week slammed the five percent salary increase for public servants as a salary decrease in relation to the consumer price index.

League General Manager Mr Bernard Wentzel said 70 percent of members fell into the lower income group and a five percent increase meant “a disgusting R3,20 a month.”

Wildcat strike at Sun City

About 3,500 Sun City workers — 70 percent of the staff complement — staged a wildcat strike this week but returned to work after management agreed to address grievances tabled by a workers’ committee at a meeting this week.
Safety record for mine

JOHANNESBURG — Impala Platinum’s Bafokeng North mine has passed the world record for fatality-free shifts in hard rock mining, the company said yesterday.
2 mine workers die

TWO mine workers were killed and eight injured in rockfalls 2km underground at Vaal Reef's no 5 shaft near Orkney in the Western Transvaal yes-

yesterday Anglo American Corporation's gold and uranium division said the rockfalls occurred on 66 level after an earth tremor measur-
ing 2,4 on the Richter scale. One of the injured is serious.
Two miners die in rockfall

Johannesburg — Two mine workers were killed and eight injured in underground rockfalls at Vaal Reef's No 5 Shaft near Orkney in the Western Transvaal yesterday morning (212)

A statement by Anglo American Corporation's gold and uranium division said the rockfalls occurred on 66 level after an earth tremor measuring 2.4 on the Richter Scale — Sapa CTB1893
News in Brief

Black judge chancellor
DURBAN — Prominent Natal advocate and South Africa's first black acting judge, Mr Justice Hassan Malik, has been appointed as the new chancellor of the University of Durban-Westville.

Rhodes wage talks stall
GRAHAMSTOWN — Wage negotiations between the administration of Rhodes University here and the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) have broken down. Both parties have agreed to mediation, probably next week.

Parachute accident death
PHALABORWA — Sergeant Matthew Dube, 31, of 451 Battalion at Phalaborwa in the Northern Transvaal, was killed yesterday when his parachute failed to open during a training exercise.

3 miners die in rockfall
JOHANNESBURG — Three mineworkers were killed and one has been reported missing in a rockfall nearly two kilometres underground at the Leeuwa coal mine on the Fos West Rand.
AIDS deal signed by mining industry

NUM and Chamber of Mines yesterday signed the first industry AIDS agreement which ensured employees rights and international testing standards, and launched comprehensive awareness and education programmes.

Chamber chief negotiator Adrian du Plessis described the educational component as the “heart of the agreement.”

He said the parties had committed themselves to raising worker awareness by education, training and counselling “to create a workplace ethic based on informed and responsible behaviour.”

He believed that their combined resources could make a “real difference to limiting the spread of the disease.”

NUM assistant general secretary Marcel Golding said the chamber acknowledged workers’ “socioeconomic conditions and the fact they live in hostels as a major factor which needs to be addressed when trying to stem the spread” of AIDS.

Du Plessis said, in terms of the agreement, infected workers would not be victimised, harassed or discriminated against by being denied appropriate employment opportunities purely on this basis.

Testing would be conducted only if justified on medical grounds and with the union’s consent. Counselling would be given and results would be confidential.
Miners voice 6 May 2018

Grievances

WELKOM — About 5 000 National Union of Mineworkers members marched on the Welkom offices of the Mineral and Energy Affairs Department on Saturday to underscore health and safety-related grievances.

A memorandum of 27 demands was handed to the department's regional director by the NUM's Free State health and safety committee.

It gave the departments of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Manpower and National Health until September 28 to respond to the demands.

These included the appointment of more mining inspectors, the provision of free boots with toe caps, the reduction of underground noise levels and legislation to stipulate adequate training for new miners.

The NUM said while it accepted the occasional non-preventable fatality, the Free State goldfields' current underground fatality rate of 1.04 per 1 000 a year was unacceptable.

There was also no statutory requirement regarding the training of semi-skilled mineworkers, who were often sent underground after 14 days.

It also demanded full pensions for workers who were totally disabled.

Other demands included non-racial pre-employment and annual medical examinations, compensation for pulmonary tuberculosis and research on the link between different dust exposures and various diseases. — Sapu.
If's not long with asbestos
Miners demand safety steps

MEMBERS of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) marched on the Welkom offices of the Mineral and Energy Affairs Department this week to underscore health and safety-related grievances.
Mine safety standards shock Australians

Heath and safety standards and working conditions in SA mines were vastly inferior to those in Australian mines, a delegation of six United Mine Workers officials from Australia said yesterday.

Here at the invitation of the NUM, delegation leader and union district vice-president Pat Heumiller said they had been shocked by the lack of safety equipment and emergency communications procedures.

They also noticed a lack of support and ventilation, making mining hazardous and hot. Workers were not issued with safety clothing to keep them dry and were drenched with sweat while operating machinery.

Heumiller said SA mines were operating under conditions similar to those in Australia “more than 30 years ago”.

Since then sophisticated machinery to monitor methane levels and mine gas composition had been installed and any potential danger picked up by the operator would lead to the evacuation and temporary closure of the mine.

In contrast, the methane monitoring equipment used in the colliery visited by the delegation was inadequate and testing was conducted only every four hours in contrast to hourly in Australia.

As a result of union organisational strength, it was able to force federal legislation to be passed to enforce stringent controls, Heumiller said.

Although safety standards were lacking in SA, he felt both management at the mines visited and the NUM were working hard to rectify the situation.

The delegation attended Cosatu’s weekend congress and said it was struck by the level of debate and dedication displayed by participants.
Two killed in rockburst

WELKOM — Two men died and a third was injured in a rockburst at President Steyn mine near Welkom early today. (212) 302-2446

Anglo American Corporation's Gold and Uranium Division announced that the rockburst — about 2,400 m underground in number four shaft — accompanied a seismic event measuring 3.5 on the Richter scale.

Rescue teams were recovering the bodies of the two men. — Sapa
2 killed in mine

WELKOM — Two men died and a third was injured in a rockburst at President Steyn mine here early yesterday morning.
Two rockfalls kill six miners at Anglo shafts

ERICA JANKOWITZ

SIX miners have been killed in two separate rockfalls related to seismic activity at Anglo American mines this week.

In the latest incident, four workers died and six were injured, one seriously, at Western Deep Levels south mine near Carletonville yesterday.

Anglo American spokesman James Duncan said the tremor, measuring 1.6 on the Richter scale, had occurred 3,500m underground.

On Tuesday, two miners were killed at President Steyn mine near Welkom in similar circumstances.

Duncan said the bodies of the men had not yet been recovered.

Despite efforts to minimize risks from seismic activity, mines were unable to predict with precision when and where tremors were likely. At both mines safety was being improved on three fronts. Increased backfilling, experimentation with new types of face support and upgraded seismic monitoring systems, Duncan said.

As a result of these improvements, fewer miners had been killed this year at Western Deeps than last year, when large seismic events had caused multiple deaths.

He said the mine was tackling safety with renewed vigour and indications were that it had implemented the correct procedures to minimize the danger of tremors.
Falling rock kills miners

JOHANNESBURG — Falling rock killed four mineworkers at a gold mine west of Johannesburg yesterday. Six other mineworkers were injured, one seriously.
15 killed in black week for miners

Six miners were killed yesterday in a rockfall at the Western Deep Levels Mine, bringing to 15 the number of miners killed in four mining accidents this week (2/12).

An Anglo American Corporation spokesman said one man was in a satisfactory condition after being trapped for eight hours at the Western Deep Levels — Sapa.
Fifteen die in mine accidents

JOHANNESBURG — Six miners were killed on Saturday in a rockfall at the Western Deep Levels Mine.

The accident raised to 15 the number of miners killed in four mining accidents last week.

An earth tremor triggered the fall. — Sapa
Nuke scare: Mines to be quizzed

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's major mining houses have been summoned to a meeting on Wednesday to explain high levels of radioactive contamination in materials found at public sites here and in other areas of the Transvaal.

Council for Nuclear Safety spokesman Mr. Phil Metcalfe said at the weekend that recent investigations of metal scrapyards had revealed unacceptable high levels of contamination. It was believed most of the country's leading mining companies were guilty of distributing "hot" material to the yards, he said.

The council's probe was triggered when authorities in the UK found a cargo of radioactive stainless steel from South Africa bound for Sheffield. The cargo, supplied by Bushveld Recyclers, originated at the Palabora Mining Company (PMC).

Although the spotlight fell on PMC, further investigations of nine other scrapyards and recycling plants had linked other mining companies to contamination, Mr. Metcalfe said.

The mining houses were all "running for cover" now that the spotlight had fallen on the issue.

He said 20 mines licensed to process radioactive material had sold contaminated material to the public, via scrap dealers, with little control over such sales.

The mines fell under Anglo American, Anglovaal, Genmin, Rand Gold, and Goldfields.

"We will be asking them to tell us what they propose to do about it," he said.

Although local technology and detection equipment were on a par with international standards, he said, South Africa lagged behind in implementing controls because of the high costs and lack of expertise. There was also far less awareness here of the hazards of processing radioactive material.

Mr. Metcalfe said there had been a lot of resistance from the mines to control measures imposed by the council.

Earthlife Africa last week urged stricter enforcement of laws governing the disposal of hazardous waste, saying material dumped on scrap heaps was often scavenged and used to build shacks.

PMC's general manager Mr. Bruce Farmer said on Friday his company was not sure that the cargo of stainless steel pipes had originated from the mine, "but we are acting as if it did because we are committed to operating safely and because some contaminated equipment has left the mine."
33 miners
Soweto 18/10/93
rescued

A TOTAL of 33 people were hoisted to
the surface by yesterday after being
trapped underground at the Kloof Gold
Mine since Wednesday.

Mine spokeswoman Ms Marion
Brower said another four were expected
to be lifted out shortly.

The men were a little weak but
paramedics were administering medical
aid, Brower said.

An estimated 120 workers were
trapped underground when some puring
collapsed on Wednesday.

The process of bringing miners to the
surface had been particularly arduous,
because each miner had to be hoisted
300 metres individually before they
reached an exit walkway.

Ventilation underground was good,
Brower said, adding the miners were
being fed and given water. - Sapa
**NEWS** Man's suicide bid

40 miners rescued

FORTY mineworkers were brought to the surface yesterday at the Kloof gold mine, 50km west of Johannesburg, where about 120 miners have been trapped underground since Wednesday. — Sapa
Concerted effort to rescue trapped miners

ABOUT 30 miners remained trapped underground in Kloof gold mine's number 3 shaft yesterday, more than 24 hours after a construction work accident damaged the shaft, a Gold Fields spokesman said.

Communications lines were severed, making it impossible for management to establish exactly how many workers were trapped and whether they were injured.

The spokesman said about 40 unjured miners had been brought to the surface during the day and management did not think that the remaining men had been hurt as they were working some distance from the shaft.

Food had been taken to the trapped men by proto teams working to locate the miners. As the shaft below 30 level had been damaged, those working deep underground were expected to use a circuitous route to get to higher levels. This could take several hours. They had sufficient water and ventilation had not been affected by the accident, the spokesman said.

Production had been halted at the shaft and all efforts were being concentrated on getting to the trapped miners.

The water pipe dislodged during the construction work — which caused the damage to the shaft — had been recovered. Normal work would resume once the shaft had been repaired.

Almost 3000 miners were working in the shaft at the time of the accident, but most had found their way out unaided.

Two workers at the Durnacol colliery near Dannhauser in northern Natal were killed on Wednesday when a conveyor belt was accidentally switched on and they were pulled into the machinery, Sapa reports.
Trapped miners reported safe

**BY PHIL MOLEFE**
and MONTSHIWA MOROKO

Rescue teams last night lowered food, water and medical supplies to 112 miners trapped 3 341 m underground at the Kloof gold mine in Carletonville since Wednesday.

Earlier rescuers established contact with another group of eight miners trapped at 3 192 m underground and managed to provide them with supplies. (212)

Mine management said all the trapped miners were "fine and in good health."

The painstaking task of hoisting each miner to the surface has begun, but mine management has warned it will take several hours to complete the rescue mission.

The rescue effort is slow because the miners have to be lifted up to a certain level, moved to a side exit and then hoisted up one by one.

Proto teams made a major breakthrough at 5.30 pm last night when they reached the 112 trapped miners after tolling through the day.

Mine management said the entire group would be brought to the surface "in hours, but the main concern at the moment is to bring them out as comfortably as possible."

None of the eight, who were trapped on level 41, was injured and it was established that the other 112 miners, found on level 43, were not in any serious danger.

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**Trapped miners are safe**

From Page 1

Piping dislodged and fell down the No 3 sub-vertical shaft. Communication lines were severed.

The first contact was made at about 4.30 pm yesterday with eight of the miners.

Management said temperatures were "comfortable."

About 2 600 mineworkers had climbed to safety by way of a site emergency exit

Mine management throw a veil of secrecy over the circumstances surrounding the disaster and prevented journalists from getting near No 3 shaft

The mine released a statement about the disaster almost 24 hours after the incident.

The NUM said there had been a "major cover-up" regarding the circumstances.
Rescue teams reach miners

JOHANNESBURG — Rescue teams made a breakthrough last night when they reached the remaining 112 miners trapped underground at the Kloof gold mine in the western Transvaal's Carltonville.

Mine management said all the trapped miners were “fine and in good health.”

By late yesterday the rescue teams had established physical contact with another eight miners trapped two levels — 3192m underground — above the last group.

The rescue teams toiled through the night and reached the miners trapped 3341m below ground at 8.30pm.

The massive rescue operation is expected to be completed by today.

Mine management said the whole group would be brought to the surface within hours, “but the main concern at the moment is to bring them out as comfortably as possible.”

112 trapped men ‘in good health’

Mr Mike Eksteen, mine manager of the Kloof division of Kloof Gold Mines, said there was no reason to believe anyone was killed or seriously injured.

Mr Eksteen said the operation would take a long time because at least four hours were required to get to the surface and workers had to be hoisted up one at a time.

The miners were trapped on Wednesday afternoon when 270m of piping dislodged and fell down the No 3 sub-vertical shaft.

Communication lines were severed.

The miners were surviving on water contained in bottles.

Mr Eksteen said about 2600 mineworkers had climbed their way to safety through an emergency exit.

Mine management threw a veil of secrecy over the circumstances surrounding the disaster and prevented journalists from getting anywhere near No 3 shaft.

Mr Eksteen defended the mine's attitude, saying its priority was not to make press statements but to rescue the workers.

“All our efforts are directed at those people, and our priority is to evacuate them as soon as possible.”

The National Union of Mineworkers said there had been a “major cover-up” regarding the circumstances which led to the accident, but Mr Eksteen said the mine would fully investigate the cause of the disaster.

Two workers at the Durnacol colliery near Dannhauser in northern Natal were killed on Wednesday when a conveyor belt was accidently switched on and they were pulled into the machinery — Sapa
Rescue still under way

Johannesburg. — About half the 120 mineworkers trapped since Wednesday by the collapse of hundreds of metres of steel piping in a shaft in the Kloof gold mine near Carletonville in the Western Transvaal, have been rescued. (212) 1/193

Mine owners Gold Fields of South Africa said yesterday about 68 workers had still to be brought to the surface.

They said the task of hauling the men to safety was "an arduous and time-consuming task."

Rescuers are having to hoist mineworkers individually from 43 level to 41 level, from 41 level to 39 level, and then to the surface by conventional means.

Rescue operations would take at least another 24 hours to complete. — Sapa
The rescue goes on... "Who's still trapped in roof?" They were asking, "Are there other people nearby?"

by THIS WEEK

My 6 km trip through hell.

"It's a deathtrap!"

Terrible nights are built out of disaster.

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Croato 17th
NEWS Draft resolutions tabled after $18/10/93

Raid: focus at Trade Centre

By Themba Molefe
Political Correspondent

THREE draft resolutions by the parties central to the raid on Umtata will be tabled for adoption before the negotiating council at the World Trade Centre today.

The Pan Africanist Congress, the South African Government and Transkei will each propose how the negotiators could best settle the political dispute arising from the South African Defence Force assault in which five children aged between 12 and 17 years were killed on October 8.

The African National Congress is also expected to press the Government to disclose information about the raid.

On Friday the Minister of Defence, Mr Kobie Coetsee, was grilled by the negotiating council but failed to convince the negotiators the Government was justified in executing the attack. He, however, revealed that one of the objectives was to capture operatives of the Azanian People's Liberation Army, the PAC's armed wing.

Already, Transkei leader Mayor-General Bantu Holomisa has announced the expulsion of the South African ambassador to his territory, Mr Horace van Rensburg. Holomisa said he should vacate Umtata by noon today.

Holomisa made the call on Saturday during the burial of the five youths in Umtata.

The Transkei delegation at the talks today is expected to repeat in its proposal that Coetsee resign. The PAC intends to propose that the resolution should provide that the council encourage bilateral meetings between the organisation and the Government to resolve their conflict.

33 miners rescued

A TOTAL of 33 people were hoisted to the surface by yesterday after being trapped underground at the Kloof Gold Mine since Wednesday.

Mine spokeswoman Miss Marion Brower said another four were expected to be lifted out shortly.

The men were a little weak but paramedics were administering medical aid, Brower said. (2/12)

An estimated 120 workers were trapped underground when some pipping collapsed on Wednesday.

The process of bringing miners to the surface had been particularly arduous, because each miner had to be hosted 300 metres individually before they reached an exit walkway.

Ventilation underground was good, Brower said, adding the miners were being fed and given water. - Sapa.
Gold mine rescue 'arduous'

JOHANNESBURG — A total of 34 miners had been hoisted to the surface by yesterday after being trapped underground at Kloof Gold Mine since Wednesday.

The men were a bit weak, but paramedics were administering medical aid, said a mine spokeswoman.

Bringing miners to the surface is arduous because each miner has to be hoisted 300 metres individually.

An estimated 120 workers were trapped underground when piping collapsed on Wednesday.

The cause of a rescuer's death on Saturday is still unknown — Sapa.
Farmers gather for crucial meeting

BY NORMAN CHANDLER
Pretoria Bureau

Farmers are to urge the government this week to revise agricultural policy as a result of political and social changes.

This is one of the major issues on the agenda at the SA Agricultural Union (SAAU) congress which starts in Bloemfontein today. Others include the economy, property rights, security, and labour legislation.

The congress — regarded by many as possibly the most important ever held — will be attended by the northern Cape and Free State agricultural unions to take a deciding role in forcing the government to rethink agricultural policy.

They say ad hoc policy adjustments have to be avoided and the white paper on agricultural policy must be revised to create a policy framework with clear objectives.

The World Bank has ruled out the nationalisation of SA's farming land for subsistence farming.

The World Bank had initially supported a plan to use commercial farming land for subsistence farmers, drawing criticism from the SAAU.

At a meeting between the SAAU and the World Bank in Pretoria at the weekend, the organizations agreed that the position which commercial agriculture assumed in the national economy "had to be placed in perspective when plans to establish small farmers on a larger scale are considered."

SAAU president Boet Fourie said yesterday the union supported the establishment of small farmers on condition that commercial agriculture was not adversely affected, such farmers were helped to become fully fledged commercial farmers, and the agricultural potential of the land was maintained.

75 trapped miners brought to surface

STAFF REPORTER

At least 75 of the 120 miners trapped at Carletonville's Kloof Gold Mine since Wednesday have been safely brought to the surface.

The workers were trapped in a flooded shaft when 270m of steel water piping collapsed down the No. 3 shaft, severing communication lines.

Brower said the process of bringing miners to the surface had been very difficult.

Holsted

Each miner had to be hoisted 300m individually before they reached an exit walkway.

The men had been trapped on levels 49 and 41, at 3,341m and 3,192m below ground. They were first lifted to 39 level then moved to the surface via an alternative route since passage through the No 3 shaft was blocked.
Trapped miners due out tonight

ERICA JANKOWITZ

MORE than 30 miners remained trapped in Gold Fields’ Kloof gold mine last night, facing a sixth day of being cut off from the surface after last week’s construction accident blocked a shaft.

But a company spokesman said they were receiving a constant supply of food and liquid refreshment, and rescue teams and paramedics were down the mine helping workers get to the surface. They were equipped to deal with cases of dehydration and exhaustion.

She said the rescue operation seemed to be speeding up and Gold Fields hoped all miners would be out by this evening. Morale was high among the trapped men and all appeared to be in good health.

Those who had been brought to the surface had been placed under medical observation, and no more injuries had been reported since a volunteer rescue worker died underground at the weekend.

The rescue process had been time-consuming because each miner had to be hauled about 300m before reaching the safe confines of an exit walkway.

NUM PWV region leaders went to the mine yesterday to meet shift stewards and those who had been brought up. The union said it would make a full statement today.

The Gold Fields spokesman said the accident could result in a 30% drop in production, even though double shifts had been introduced in other sections to minimize disruption. Although the number three vertical shaft had been rendered inoperable, other areas were operating normally.

A full statement about the effect of the accident would be made after all miners had been brought to the surface.
75 trapped miners freed

JOHANNESBURG — Seventy-five miners at Kloof gold mine who were trapped underground when a tunnel collapsed last week have been hoisted to the surface, the company said yesterday.

Using the mine's estimate of 220 miners trapped, 45 still remain underground. Proto teams have been battling since Thursday to free the trapped men. The miners were being fed and given water, and morale was high, the company said — Sapa.
Kloof miners ‘may be out by this evening’

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — All the miners trapped in Kloof, gold mine's No 3 shaft are now in areas from which they can be brought to the surface.

Chairman of Gold Fields of South Africa Robyn Plumbridge announced this at the company's annual meeting today.

He expressed regret that a member of the rescue team had died during the operation.

Engineers were trying to clear the shaft,

Gold Fields spokesman Marion Brower said all the miners were expected to be brought to the surface by this evening.

She said 150 workers — and not 120 as Gold Fields originally stated — had been trapped when collapsed pipework blocked exits three kilometres underground on Wednesday.

All those rescued were in good health.
Miners rescued after six days in bowels of the earth

☐ All 150 surface unhurt after underground ordeal

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — "Thank God we are alive," Dawid Janse van Rensburg said as he hugged his tearful wife after spending six days trapped in darkness, more than 3km underground at the Kloof Gold Mine near Carletonville.

An excited but exhausted Mr Van Rensburg, 45, and three fellow supervisors were the last of 150 miners rescued yesterday in a "mammoth" operation after they were trapped last Wednesday when steel piping collapsed, preventing their exit.

All the miners, who had to travel a route of more than 9km to reach the surface, were unhurt. But on Saturday, rescue team member Vivian Mbele, 33, died from bleeding in the stomach, according to post-mortem results.

An investigation is under way to determine why the 270m of water piping fell down the No 3 sub-vertical shaft. Mr Van Rensburg said he had prayed for the first time in his life during his ordeal in the bowels of the earth, but that his spirits had been kept up by his three sons — who also work on the mine — who regularly spoke to him via a two-way radio.

He said some miners had panicked when the water piping fell, but calmed down when they heard noises from the rescue team working above them.

He said he and the other trapped miners spent most of their time sleeping.

"My sons kept me going. Their presence, even though I could not see them at the time, did me a great deal of good. While assisting with the rescue work, they kept bringing messages from my wife and took mine to her.

Mr Van Rensburg's wife, Klein, said she was worried but her sons kept assuring her that everything was fine.

"I cried sometimes, thinking of Dawid trapped in the belly of the earth and not knowing what would happen next. But my sons helped a lot, because they told me that they were speaking to him, so I knew he was alive. That was all I needed to hear."

Another supervisor, Dirk Kapp, rescued together with Mr Van Rensburg yesterday, said the first thing he would do when he got home would be to take a bath and sleep.

Mine manager Mike Eksteen said that 75 miners were brought to the surface yesterday, the last one at 12:30pm.

Hundreds of rescuers and paramedic personnel were involved. The teams lowered water, food and medicine to the trapped men.

Mr Eksteen said the temperature below was "comfortable". But the miners found a novel way to cool down:

"The miners did a lot of swimming in the settlers (pools of accumulated water) during the first two days.

"We really want to thank them for their assistance and fortitude and for remaining calm," Mr Eksteen said. He said they would all be given a week's leave.

He congratulated the rescue team and all his staff for a job well done. He could not say when the mine would resume operating.

Kloof mine chairman Alan Munro denied allegations by the National Union of Mineworkers that the accident had occurred because management had cut down on maintenance.

"That is far from the truth. From the start our first priority was to rescue them (the miners)," he said.

He said the miners had never been in any real danger because they always had water and had received food and medical assistance after being trapped for two days.
Praise for rescuers as the last trapped Kloof miners reach surface

Munro said "I want to pay tribute to all involved — to those who were rescued for their fortitude and endurance and those who were involved in the arduous task of rescuing for their courage."

Two rescue workers were singled out for special accolades. Derek Houtenbach of Vaal Reefs, who abseiled down the shaft to make contact with the trapped men, and Blyvooruitzigt's Jurie Scheepers, who was winched down the shaft to determine damage. About 40 proto teams, or 200 rescue workers from mines in the area were involved in the operation.

Ekteeen described how about 75 men were manually winched to 35 level from which they could walk about 9km to the main shaft and from there get to the surface. On Friday, four motoring winches were installed to speed up the process.

The miners were trapped in a development area of the mine with single access, as was normal in such areas until tunnels were constructed. Eksteen said Kloof had permission to have 400 workers in the area.

The accident had crippled the power, water and communications systems, meaning workers were trapped in the dark once their lamp batteries ran out. Ventilation was not affected, but temperatures at that level were always high.

The NUM described conditions underground as horrific. It said the men trapped in the lowest level, more than 3,800m underground, had alerted colleagues at higher levels "by their cries for help".

Many of those who had made their own way to the surface had collapsed and had to be helped by fellow workers.

In addition, the NUM — which is not recognized at Kloof but represents about 20% of the workforce — was harsh in its criticism of the mine, both for its lack of communication following the accident and for safety standards.

NUM PWV chairman Gwede Montsashe said Gold Fields had a history of attempting to exclude the NUM from the mine and of not keeping it informed.

NUM president James Motlatsi said "We are deeply concerned about a major cover-up regarding the actual circumstances of the accident."

NUM health and safety representative San Jonas said the union was not involved in setting up and monitoring safety conditions at the mine. He said workers had spent the first couple of days without food and had to survive on drain water.

Eksteen confirmed that the first food was sent to the trapped men on Thursday evening, but explained the logistics of the operation made it impossible before then.

Sapa reports that he denied the NUM claim that a cutback in maintenance could have caused the accident.
Govt to launch probe into Kloof accident

ERICA JANKOWITZ

The government mining engineer said yesterday a full investigation into the Kloof mine accident would be conducted, while the SACU called for Gold Fields to be charged with criminal negligence.

Government spokesman Piet Botha declined to answer questions about the accident, saying it was sub judice. He also said the department had not yet conducted an inspection, the first step in the process.

The NUM claimed Kloof engineers had been down the shaft to assess damage. Spokesman Jerry Mpatstadi claimed this action was irregular.

Senior Chamber of Mines technical personnel said in most instances shafts were out of bounds until the official inspection had been completed.

Industry sources said it would appear a "significant length of time" elapsed between the accident occurring and management assessing the implications. This could explain the information blackout and the time taken to summon sufficient rescue teams.

The NUM also claimed the proto teams had been inadequately equipped when they first arrived and workers from the shaft who had managed to use alternative exits from the mine had been forced to join rescue operations.

Despite having to walk about 5km in onerous conditions, these men had not been compensated, but had immediately been put to work either as rescuers or in unaffected areas of the mine. The rescuer who died, Vivian Mbele, was a Kloof employee.

Mpatstadi expressed concern at the psychological damage suffered by the trapped men. He said management's attitude was that counselling was available, but only on a voluntary basis.

Gold Fields has declined to comment on the matter.
Black miners given 'raw deal'

By Ike Motsapi

A ROW has erupted between the National Union of Mineworkers and the management of the Gold Fields-owned Kloof Gold Mine in Carletonville over the way black miners were treated after being rescued.

Several black miners said they were not given medical treatment nor taken to hospital for a check-up as claimed by management.

"I am worried because we were forced to drink dirty water underground in order to survive," said one angry miner.

About 150 miners were trapped about 3 000m below the surface for six days since last Wednesday after a mine accident. The last group was brought to the surface on Tuesday.

Mr Jerry Majatladi, media officer of NUM said black miners were not given medical treatment and check-ups.

"Management has done nothing to summon the services of their experts who might assist in alleviating the plight of victims of the accidents. The primary interest of management is to ensure that production is not lost."

"Management has once more shown its total disregard for worker's rights," said Majatladi.

Management spokesman, Miss Maron Bruwer denied the allegations, saying there were paramedics and medical teams which treated miners once they were brought to the surface.

Bruwer said: "These people were immediately taken to hospital for medical check-up. Once that had been done they were allowed to rest for 10 days before returning to work," she said.
Call for speedy economic change

Affirmative action needed now – Manuel

BY CHRIS WHITFIELD
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ANC economics head Trevor Manuel warned last night of an "explosion" if affirmative action policies were not applied urgently.

In the keynote address to the "Business Revival" conference hosted by the Small Business Development Corporation in conjunction with The Star and the Sowetan, Manuel provided a "shortlist" of economic policies in need of rapid changes.

Manuel, who spoke in place of ANC president Nelson Mandela, said: "An economy which is perceived to be both owned and controlled by a little white enclave will not be able to find itself on a sustainable growth path."

"Delays in an affirmative action programme will cost this country dearly. We have been paying lip-service to this dire need — the situation is becoming increasingly polarised, and we cannot afford an explosion," he said.

Manuel also warned of a need for State and parastatal institutions to be "sufficiently transformed to effect the necessary changes with the due determination."

Characterising the economy as still stagnating into a marath, he said clear strategies had to be developed.

These included additional focus on the social dimension.

"It is in this context that the reconstruction and development programme is so significant. In addition, we need a sound grasp of South Africa's current and past economic failures."

These included shortcomings in the 1980 to 1975 growth period, the maldistribution of wealth, and the patterns of ownership and control.

Five miners die, 14 hurt in rockfall

BY STAFF REPORTER

Five miners were killed and 14 injured in a rockfall after a seismic event at the Kloof Mining Company's Leendoorn Mine near Carletonville yesterday.

More than 500 miners have been killed in accidents since January 1993.

Gold Fields Mining, which owns Kloof Mining, said the miners were 2,400 m below surface when the seismic event, measuring 7.5 on the Richter Scale, occurred at 8.15 am.

The rockfall took place on the 24 level in No 1 shaft.

The injured men were treated by mine medical personnel.

Last month, 150 miners were trapped more than 3 km underground at Gold Fields' Kloof Gold Mine near Carletonville.

All the miners were finally brought to safety after spending six days underground.

The Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs is investigating the accident.

The National Union of Mineworkers said: "This emphasises our long-standing call for an inquiry into the safety and health of this country's mines. The mines are primarily concerned with profit-making and not people's lives."
Rockfall kills 5 miners

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — A rockfall nearly 2.5km underground killed five miners and injured 14 at Leeudorn, a division of Gold Fields' Kloof gold mining company.

A Gold Fields official said of the 14 injured, two were admitted to hospital but were in no danger and the others had been treated at medical stations.

The news, coupled with a sharp fall in bullion prices, knocked 32.6c off Kloof's share price which fell to R94.50. The accident at Leeudorn coincided with a separate incident at Gold Fields's Deelkrans mine, which killed one miner.

The mining house said damage associated with last month's accident at the Kloof gold mine, which trapped 150 workers underground for several days, would not affect the company's results in the December quarter.

Gold Fields gold division executive director Mr Alan Munro said Kloof had enough ore stored on the surface to meet the shortfall in production which he declined to quantify caused by the accident.
Leeudoorn rock fall kills 5 miners

A ROCK fall nearly 2.5km underground yesterday killed five miners and injured 14 at Leeudoorn, a division of Gold Fields' Kloof gold mining company.

A Gold Fields official said two of the injured were admitted to hospital, but the remainder had been treated at mine medical stations.

The news of the accident, coupled with a sharp fall in bullion prices, knocked 33c off Kloof's share price, which fell to R29.50.

The accident at Leeudoorn, near Westmaria, coincided with an incident at Gold Field's Deelkraal mine, near Carletonville, in which one miner was killed.

Leeudoorn

at Leeudoorn was "tragic" it would have little impact on production and was unrelated to the accident at Kloof.

However, NUM spokesman Hasha Gordon said the union was concerned about the mine's refusal to allow it to take part in today's inspection at Leeudoorn.

Management had said that none of the dead or injured workers were NUM members but, as their names had not been released, the union was unable to verify this.

Also, any worker in the area conversely could be held responsible for the accident and should be represented at the inspection.

The NUM had asked government mining engineer Piet Botha to intervene, but the department was "not supportive".

Gold Fields declined to comment on the union's exclusion. The NUM said it would take part in the Deelkraal inspection.

It condemned Gold Fields' safety record, saying it wondered if the group's mines were taking adequate care of workers or adhering to codes of practice to prevent accidents "which continuously occur".

Erica Jankowitz
and Matthew Curtin

The mining house also announced that damage associated with last month's accident at the Kloof gold mine, which trapped 150 workers underground for several days, would not affect the company's results in the December quarter.

Gold Fields gold division executive director Alan Munro said Kloof had enough underground ore stored on surface to meet the shortfall in production -- which he declined to quantify. He said the accident...
NUM opposes new health Bill

ERICA JANKOWITZ

The NUM yesterday rejected the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Work's Bill, calling it an attempt to reduce employee categories entitled to compensation in the name of deracialising legislation.

In a letter to the Joint Committee of Parliament for Health Matters, NUM assistant general secretary Marcel Golding charged that up to 75% fewer miners would qualify for compensation should the Bill become law.

"The Bill, as tabled, goes far beyond its principal purpose to remove racial discrimination. It will reduce, by up to 75%, the number of workers who qualify for compensation. We therefore oppose the Bill as currently framed in the strongest terms," he said.

NUM legal adviser Fleur Plummer described the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Work's Act, which would be replaced by the Bill, as a "dinosaur of apartheid legislation".

She said it was an embarrassment to government, but parties with a vested interest in reducing compensation costs were a powerful lobby group and would push to have the Bill promulgated in its present form.

"In terms of the old Act, black miners received lesser compensation, but they still were compensated. Under the new Bill, although compensation is equal, fewer black miners will qualify than was previously the case."

The NUM said it had approached both the Health Department and the Chamber of Mines to voice its concerns about the Bill's provisions and the union felt these could lead to a "mutually satisfactory resolution".

As an interim measure, the NUM proposed that all workers be compensated the equivalent of white miners' current payouts. After next year's commission of inquiry into mining health and safety, the whole issue of occupational disease and compensation could be reviewed.

Golding said a major cause of lung disease on mines was their failure to reduce underground dust levels. This was exacerbated by the high incidence of tuberculosis.

Generally, 250 people per 100,000 had tuberculous compared with 1,000 per 100,000 in the mining industry.

In terms of the Bill, only miners who were diagnosed as being permanently disabled by TB would be entitled to compensation. The NUM estimated the change would reduce the number of workers who received compensation from about 4,000 to about 400 a year.

The Chamber of Mines was asked to comment, but declined to do so before today's executive committee meeting, which will discuss the issue in detail.
Occupational diseases Bill to be tabled

THE Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Amendment Bill, which eliminates racial discrimination in compensation, would be debated in Parliament today, outgoing NUM assistant general secretary Marcel Golding said yesterday.

Black workers now receive compensation of R2 000 to R5 200 compared with R20 000 to R60 000 for white counterparts. In terms of the Bill, earnings-based compensation from R17 000 to R70 000 will be paid to all workers contracting occupational diseases as defined in the Act and, for the first time, mining industry employers would be required to cover medical costs of these workers.

Golding said about 8 000 miners were compensated for occupational diseases each year, more than half for tuberculosis.

The Bill, resulting from negotiations between players in the industry, notably the NUM and the Chamber of Mines, was an improvement on previous drafts which the NUM had opposed, he said.

"The Bill is an interim solution as a commission of inquiry into health and safety in the mining industry will sit next year and the issue of compensation will form part of the inquiry," Golding said.
MINING — ACCIDENTS

1994
Mine rockfall deaths

JOHANNESBURG — The body of a miner missing after a rockfall at Anglo American's Western Deep Levels near Carletonville in the far West Rand has been found, bringing the number of dead in the underground accident to three.

Three workers were injured. The accident — which took place in the gold producer's East mine some 3100m below surface — followed a seismic event measuring 1.9 on the Richter Scale — Sapa ARG 11/94.
Tighter laws vital for safer mines

TIGHTER legislation and improved training are vital if the mining industry is to improve safely significantly, says Government Mining Engineer Jan Raath.

The London-based Mining Journal reported in its latest edition that Raath said the Minerals Act was too vague on safety issues. Much of the training of newly recruited mine workers was dependent on trial and error, he said.

His criticism of safety regulations and training standards came as it appeared that the launch of the government commission of inquiry into safety, health and compensation in the industry was being delayed by administrative wrangles.

The commission, backed by the Chamber of Mines and unions, was appointed in June, but an industry source said it had yet to appoint assessors to oversee its work.

Raath said the NUM’s failure to appoint a representative was snarling up the commission’s activities.

NUM officials were unavailable for comment at the weekend.

Meanwhile, latest Chamber figures indicate 1993 could be one of the safest years on record for the mining industry, with sharp decline in the number of deaths on coal and gold mines, as well as reduced reportable injury and fatality rates.

Chamber statistics for the 11 months to November show 369 mine workers died on

Mine safety

gold mines compared with 400 in 1992, equivalent to an improved fatality rate of 1.36 deaths for every 1,000 workers.

If sustained, that would be the lowest rate since 1988 and compared with 1.42 the previous year.

The reportable injury rate so far stood at 28.22 for gold mines and 4.38 for coal mines, compared with 1992 rates of 31.02 and 4.66 for every 1,000 workers.

Raath said legislation stipulated that mine managers had to take all “reasonable measures” to ensure workers’ safety.

However, such measures were hard to define. Mine managers were rarely prosecuted for negligence.

He said more than 90% of mine accidents were attributable to human error. While most occurred on gold mines, rates on collieries were relatively high in
Miners die in pressure burst

JOHANNESBURG — Nine miners had died and two were still missing yesterday after a pressure burst at Kloof Gold Mine's Leudoorn section near Carletonville in the western Transvaal. (2/12)

The tragedy occurred on Monday afternoon.

A miner who had earlier been reported seriously injured was numbered yesterday among the dead.

Gold Fields of South Africa said rescue parties were continuing a search for two workers.

— Sapa
Nine miners dead

NINE miners had died and two were still missing yesterday morning after a pressure burst at Kloof Gold Mine's Lensdoorn section near Carletonville in the Western Transvaal on Monday afternoon.

A miner who had been reported to have been seriously injured on Monday was numbered among the dead yesterday.

Gold Fields of South Africa said in a statement, rescue parties were continuing a search for two workers.

The names of the dead are being withheld until their next-of-kin have been informed — Sapa
Two Kloof miners still trapped after burst

Two miners remained trapped in Kloof gold mine's Leudora section near Carletonville yesterday after a pressure burst killed nine workers on Monday.

One of the men who died was brought to the surface alive on the day of the accident, Gold Fields announced.

The NUM condemned the incident, which occurred days after a similar accident at Anglo American's Vaal Reefs mine.

"It's the 13th day of the new year and already there have been three fatal accidents on our gold mines resulting in several deaths," NUM press officer Jerry Majatladi said.

He described Kloof's safety record as "disastrous" as this was its third accident in three months.

The NUM would call on the new government to use the findings of the planned commission of inquiry into health and safety, due to sit later this month, to draft appropriate legislation, he said.

The commission would consist of the NUM, the Chamber of Mines and government representatives.
Cosatu slams Gold Fields safety

ERICA JANKOWITZ

COSATU has accused Gold Fields of SA of having an appalling safety record on its mines due to negligence.

At the weekend the union called for an urgent investigation into safety at all mines, especially Gold Fields'.

Cosatu also expressed lack of confidence in the Mineral and Energy Affairs Department's ability to investigate accidents in a non-partisan manner, saying it protected companies rather than workers.

Reacting to the Leroondra accident last week, in which 11 miners lost their lives, the union said it fully supported "criminal and civil action being taken against those individuals and companies guilty of negligence which results in injury or loss of life."
Two miners killed in underground fire

A fire 2.5km underground at Gold Fields' West Driefontein mine near Carletonville claimed the lives of two miners yesterday after they inadvertently passed through a ventilation door and succumbed to smoke fumes, Gold Fields said.

The fire, detected on Sunday morning, had not been contained by late yesterday, but the blaze was being fought, a spokesman said. The dead workers had not been involved in fighting the fire.

The NUM disputed this, asking how workers not involved in fire-fighting could have been killed a day after the fire had been detected. NUM Carletonville branch secretary Arche Plane said: "This suggests workers are still in the area and have not been informed about the risk of going down. That's suicidal."

He said he had not yet been told about the fire, which was typical of Gold Fields. It told the union of accidents only if its members were directly involved.

The company could not say what had caused the fire or estimate its effect on production. The area had been evacuated.

A rockburst at Gold Fields' Leseloorn mine killed 11 miners last week. Cosatu recently called for an urgent investigation into the group's "appalling" safety record.
Cyanide poisons miners

BY ANNA LOUW
EAST RAND BUREAU

More than 100 miners were treated for cyanide poisoning after being overcome by leaking gas about 400 m underground at the Primrose gold mine in Germiston early today.

Germiston's fire chief, Simon Barkhuizen, said the cyanide leak had been discovered soon after the day shift had gone underground at 6 am.

Rescue workers and disaster buses from Germiston Central, Primrose and Wadeville fire stations were despatched to the scene.

Barkhuizen said the miners were being treated as they were brought to the surface.

At the time of going to press, miners were still being evacuated from the shaft.
Mines dispute

'HIV dismissals'

TWO mining houses have disputed NUM allegations that they dismissed 16 miners who tested positive for the HIV virus.

The NUM said 10 miners from Gemmin's Beatrix mine and six from JCI's Randfontein Estates were dismissed last year despite the union's "AIDS agreement" between the Chamber of Mines and the union.

Gemmin said yesterday the allegations were untrue, while JCI said it was investigating the matter.

The NUM has demanded the reinstatement of the dismissed workers. Both management are expected to respond today.

The AIDS agreement between the NUM and the chamber states that "HIV positive employees will be protected against discrimination, victimisation or harassment".

It also states that "no employee should suffer adverse consequences, whether dismissal or denial of appropriate alternative employment opportunities, merely on the basis of HIV infection."

NUM health and safety co-ordinator Sani Jonas said the union was against testing members for AIDS as the disease "does not hinder or affect work performance."

"We are committed to protecting our members' rights in terms of fair employment practices. With AIDS, there is no vaccine and the disease's spread can be limited only by informed and responsible behaviour by employees and employers, "The NUM said the 10 workers from Beatrix left the mine last year after faction fighting, but returned at the year-end. The mine agreed to reinstate them once their records were checked. Instead it forced the workers to undergo medical examinations and refused to employ them after they tested positive for HIV.

But Gemmin spokesman Andrew Davidson said medical examinations were compulsory for all prospective employees. Employment was at the discretion of mine management. He denied that Gemmin discriminated against HIV-positive workers and said "no miners were dismissed because of AIDS tests."

The union said the Randfontein six were tested for AIDS without being consulted and without the union's knowledge. They were later dismissed.

In terms of the AIDS agreement, the union has to be informed before examinations are conducted and independent doctors should be used.

JCI spokesman Andre Geidenhuys said the union had named one worker if a mistake had been made the company would rectify it.
BY ANNA LOUW
EAST RAND BUREAU

A total of 168 miners were admitted to hospital after inhaling sulphur dioxide 400 m down the Pierron Gold Mine's Waverley and Belmore shafts in Germiston yesterday.

General manager Mike Morlock said 344 miners were evacuated from the Waverley shaft, which was worst hit.

Morlock said the sulphur dioxide caused an irritation to the throat and lungs.

He said the miners smelt an unusual odour when they reached level 3, 400 m underground, after they went on duty between 5.30 and 6 am.

The mine supervisor, Peet Swart, was alerted by telephone and went underground to investigate the problem. He quickly realised the gravity of the situation and ordered a general evacuation before alerting Germiston's emergency services.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), however, reacted with outrage to the fact that miners had even been allowed to go underground before the accumulation level of poisonous gases had been tested, reports Sapa.

NUM spokesman Jerry Majela said modern technology had advanced to an extent where gases could be detected from the surface without risking workers' lives. "Workers should under no circumstances be used as guinea pigs. Human lives are more important than gold," he said.

Miners were treated with the antidote, amyl nitrate, as they arrived at the surface, and rescue workers from Germiston's three fire stations gave emergency treatment before transporting the miners to the Delmore Clinic.

Morlock said it was suspected that pulp from a slime dam, which contains a small amount of cyanide, could have entered the shafts through an outcrop which appeared to have collapsed.
Boycott backs striking miners

PHALABORWA - A consumer boycott has begun here in support of members of the National Union of Mineworkers, who are on strike at the Foskor Mine over a wage dispute.

A spokesman for the SA Communist Party, which has organised the boycott along with the ANC, Cosatu and the local civic organisation, said the stayaway would continue until the dispute was resolved.
NUM set to negotiate on healers' sick notes

THE National Union of Mineworkers will negotiate with employers to secure recognition of medical certificates and sick notes issued by traditional healers.

The NUM took this resolution at its eighth national conference in Pretoria last week. Its resolutions were released yesterday.

The union said it wanted 56 days sick leave a year for its members and 10 days paternity leave for its female members.

It would also investigate its own registered charity or development agency to help miners and mining communities.

It wanted dismissal benefits increased to R5 000 for workers, R4 500 for wives and R2 500 a child. It would also negotiate adequate transport to the funerals of deceased mineworkers for family members and friends.

The NUM also resolved to become actively involved in the campaign against more nuclear power stations.

It called for an end to the secrecy surrounding the nuclear energy industry and the upholding of international health and safety standards. It said a forum in which nuclear issues could be discussed should be established.

A discussion document on a draft energy policy noted the advantages of coal as a generator of electricity as job opportunities, its cheapness and the preservation of technology built up over the years.

However, stricter pollution guidelines would have to be adopted.

The NUM said the building of the Koeberg nuclear reactor had been a political and not an economic decision. — Sapa.
Johannesburg — Altogether 1,800 striking workers at Germiston's Primrose Gold Mine have been told to report to work today or face immediate dismissal. **CT 23.2.74**

Reports by Staff Reporter Owen Correspondent, Super Tobacco AP and UP.
Fire traps 35 miners underground

The Argus Correspondent

Johannesburg — An underground fire at the Kourafontein coal mine near Middleburg in the eastern Transvaal has left 35 miners trapped 181m underground.

Although 17 of the miners are safe in a rescue bay, their 18 colleagues are still unaccounted for.

This is the second major mine disaster in three days. On Tuesday night the Merenspruit suburb of Virginia was buried under tons of sludge when a mine slimes dam burst its banks after a heavy downpour.

Noel Hallgreen, spokesman for Trans-Natal, which owns the mine, said a fire broke out underground near the mine's Gloria shaft at 12:45am today.

Mr. Hallgreen said the fire blocked the miners' exit to the surface, but 17 of them managed to make it to a refuge bay 181m underground.

It is not known what happened to the other 18 men, who were working in the vicinity when the blaze began.
Meeting called after third Lebanon death

MANAGEMENT and the NUM will meet today in an effort to reduce tension at at Gold Fields’ Lebanon mine in Westonaria after a third miner died yesterday following weekend clashes.

Gold Fields said it regretted the deaths. The cause of the violence was being investigated, but it appeared to be “politically motivated”. Workers could be supplied with protection on their way to and from work.

The NUM criticised the company for allowing Inkatha PWV chairman Thembisile Khoza on to the mine on Tuesday while permission for a union meeting had apparently been refused.

The fighting started on Friday night and continued until Sunday. Gold Fields management said it would continue meeting employee delegations and union representatives in an effort to “resolve concerns with regard to violence”. It said attendance over the past three days averaged 85%.

Management was not sure if workers would return to work today.
Workers ‘part of assessments’

Erica Jankowitz

Close evaluation became a base from which to analyse training needs to continually upgrade skills and all workers understood the process as they had contributed to writing job descriptions.

McDonald emphasised that companies needed to assess each job’s worth, although this was an unpopular concept with unions.

Unions tended to concentrate on the skills content of evaluation and overlook worth, as they felt this was a subjective and value-laden concept.

She suggested that companies explore more creative ways of determining competency, particularly when it came to recognising skills brought to the job.

In implementing a job evaluation system based on broad banding, a company should determine the mix of skills required for each task to be performed competently. Companies needed to be realistic in assessing training and skill requirements, she warned.

She told delegates whose companies were not organised by trade unions not to be complacent. Whitecollar unionism was growing rapidly and would make inroads into traditionally unorganised work areas.

Mine extends strike deadline

Jacquie Golding

Management at Primrose Gold Mine in Germiston has extended until today its deadline for striking NUM members to return to work.

Primrose MD Jomo King earlier this week threatened to dismiss workers if they did not report for duty by Wednesday, but yesterday he said management had decided to extend the ultimatum and to pay workers the 30c-a-day wage increase demanded by the union.

King said about 300 afternoon shift workers had reported for work yesterday but most of about 1 800 morning shift workers had continued striking.

About 1 800 workers went on strike earlier this week after management failed to pay increases which had been part of an agreement reached between the union and management last year.

Management said the agreement had been conditional on the mine reaching productivity targets.

NUM officials said yesterday some workers had wanted to return to work and others had wanted to continue striking.

The workers wanting to strike had rejected the 30c-a-day increase and supported a new demand for a R2-a-day increase.

King said Primrose would not know until today whether the strike was resolved. He hoped the mine would “pull together” and continue to operate as usual.

Meeting called after third Libanon death

Management and the NUM will meet today in an effort to reduce tension at Gold Fields’ Libanon mine in Westonaria after a third miner died yesterday following weekend clashes.

Gold Fields said it regretted the deaths.

The cause of the violence was being investigated, but it appeared to be “politically motivated”.

Workers could be supplied with protection on their way to and from work.

The NUM criticised the company for allowing Intikha PWV chairman Themba Khosa on to the mine on Tuesday while permission for a union meeting had apparently been refused.

The fighting started on Friday night and continued until Sunday.

Gold Fields management said it would continue meeting employees’ delegations and union representatives in an effort to “resolve concerns with regard to violence”. It said attendance over the past three days averaged 85%.

Management was not sure if workers would return to work today.
Camera indicates no sign of life in fire-hit mine

The Argus Correspondent

MIDDELBURG — A sophisticated camera, probing the fire-ravaged Koornfontein coal mine today where 19 miners are trapped, has shown no sign of life.

Rescue workers have also reached the area where the men were believed to have been working, but they have found no sign of them.

The miners have been underground for more than 40 hours. They have battery lights which can last for 12 hours if sparingly used.

Trapped now in the dark, they were equipped with an emergency 30-minute air supply and designed for use in evacuation to safety immediately after a fire starts.

Proto teams are combing the maze of tunnels 160 metres underground. Lethal levels of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide are forcing them to wear breathing apparatus.

Seventeen other miners were rescued today. They were unharmed but were taken to Middelburg Hospital for observation. Trans-Natal Coal Corporation said the fire is still burning, but has been contained and visibility has improved.
MIDDELBURG — Rescue teams last night reached 17 of the 36 miners trapped by an underground fire at the Koornfontein colliery near Middelburg in the eastern Transvaal, Trans-Natal Coal Corporation announced.

The 17 miners had sought shelter in a refuge bay and were in good health.

Rescuers found a route past the blaze in Gloria section and arrived at the bay at 7.30pm, Trans-Natal senior manager Mr Noel Halgren said in a statement.

The teams then continued the search underground for the remaining 19 missing miners, while surface teams continued to drill a hole for a rescue capsule, to be lowered.

The two groups were working in different parts of the mine when their exits were cut off by the fire, the cause of which was not yet known.

Those in the refuge bay included I S Claassen (fighter), J C Lock (miner), A Malaza (roofbolter operator), S Manana (shuttlecar driver), W Mokwena (bell operator), P Smit (electrician), H H Thebe (technical assistant) and G Vayo (front-end-loader driver), Trans-Natal said.

Probe holes were being drilled from the surface to try to establish the whereabouts of the missing workers.

Trans-Natal's main concern was the safety of employees and everything possible was being done to ensure they were rescued as soon as possible, Mr Halgren said.

The cause of the fire has not yet been established and an inquiry has begun.

Rescue workers are trying to isolate the fire so that nitrogen can be pumped in to extinguish it, he said.

The mine management is trying to reach the trapped miners' families and will only release their names today — Sapa.
Underground fire traps 36 coal miners

Business Day Reporters

THIRTY-six miners at Trans-Natal's Koornfontein Mine were still trapped by an underground fire late yesterday, mine spokesman Lyn Goldenhuys said.

A hole was being drilled to reach 17 of the trapped coal miners at a rescue bay 181m underground, and contact had been made. Food, water and playing cards were being provided through a drill haul.

The mine expected rescuers to reach the rescue bay this morning. But 10 proto teams were still trying to locate 19 missing miners by drilling probe holes in strategic sites. The two groups were working in different parts of the mine when the fire cut off their exit route.

The fire broke out shortly before 11am yesterday at the Gloria shaft of the mine, 48km south of Middelburg in the eastern Transvaal. Proto teams were trying to isolate the fire so nitrogen gas could be pumped in to extinguish it.

Goldenhuys said rescue teams from the neighbouring mines and the Chamber of Mines had arrived to assist the search for the missing workers and he was confident the workers were still alive.

The cause of the fire had not yet been established. A joint inquiry by the mine and other authorities had already begun.

Although unions were not involved in the search, he said qualified representatives would be welcomed to assist.

A NUM delegation, headed by Witbank health and safety official Strongman Mpaligana, was at the mine.

"Once again the question of safety on mines has to be addressed to prevent such incidents," a NUM official said. "An investigation, whether independendly or with management, will have to be conducted."

A meeting between the NUM and management is due to take place as soon as the missing workers have been found.

"Mine authorities hope to make contact with other missing workers this morning," Speaking at a news conference earlier in the day, Gencor spokesman Noel Halkgreen said. Management was concerned about the safety of its employees and would do everything possible to ensure it.
14 bodies found as mine fire blazes

MIDDELBURG — Rescuers have found the bodies of 14 miners killed by an underground fire at the Koornfontein colliery in Middelburg in the eastern Transvaal.

Although five miners were still unaccounted for, rescue teams had to abandon the underground search yesterday afternoon as the intensity of the fire was increasing.

"To continue the search for the missing mine workers under these circumstances will endanger the lives of the proto teams," Trans-Natal Coal Corporation manager Noel Halgreen said.

The bodies of the 14 miners were found in an area south of a refuge bay where 17 others had found shelter when the fire started on Wednesday night.

The 17 were not injured and were brought to the surface on Thursday night.

It appeared the miners had been making their way towards the rescue bay which they probably missed because of poor visibility.

A Chamber of Mines rescue rig is continuing to drill a hole through which a rescue capsule can be lowered.

The drill is expected to break through into the working area 181 metres below surface near the door of the refuge bay, this morning and will be used to search for the five missing miners. — Sapa.
Miners pass bay, die

Staff Reporter

SIX of the 14 miners killed in an underground fire at the Koornfontein colliery in Middelburg yesterday walked past a refuge bay — and safety — trying to escape from the smoke-filled mine-shaft.

Trans-Natal Coal corporation manager Mr Noel Hargreave said yesterday rescue teams had found the bodies of the six, but were unable to bring them to the surface.

He said 17 other miners had spent 30 hours in the refuge bay — required in all mines by law to be within 1 000m of where miners work — until rescue teams were able to reach them.

Meanwhile, a Chamber of Mines rescue drilling rig was continuing to drill a hole through which a rescue capsule could be lowered in the search for five missing employees.
Two miners still missing

JACOUB GOLDBERG

He attributed the increase of deaths in the mining sector to the "negligence of management".

"It is totally unacceptable that Trans-Natal, an experienced coal industry, did not secure their underground electrical substations in fire-resistant cages," said Majatladi.

"Mines should be controlled by a new government which takes into account safety regulations and workers' lives."

Halgreen dismissed NUM claims as "assumption", adding that an investigation by the Mineral and Energy Affairs Department into the cause of the accident would begin as soon as conditions underground allow.

"We will then be in a position to prevent the recurrence of such a disaster," he said.

Production has not yet resumed and it is estimated that 25% of the mine's production capacity has been affected in the short term.

Production at the Gloria shaft will be restored to 85% within a month.

Bribed buyer refused leave to appeal

BLOEMFONTEIN — A former SA Air Force commandant has been refused leave to appeal against his imprisonment on three counts of bribery.

Albert Joho Rheeder, of Wierda Park, Pretoria, was responsible for the purchase of household furnishings and other items for the SAAF. He pleaded guilty in the Pretoria Regional Court in November 1992 to nine counts that arose from "kickbacks" from merchants.

He was effectively imprisoned for five years and fined R100,000. The imprisonment was imposed under the law that allows prison authorities to consider early release under corrective supervision.

An appeal to the Transvaal Supreme Court was dismissed on August 13, 1993.

The charges relevant to the present application involved cash amounts of R348,145, a chainsaw, a woodwork machine, curtains worth R20,000 and a vacuum cleaner — Sapa.

Housing plan preferred "subsidy"

Bill said that with the main thrust of the plan completed, government believed it could wait no longer. "There is such a pressing socioeconomic need that we decided to go ahead and announce it now."

He said 120 to 200 jobs were created for every R1m spent on housing. With estimated annual expenditure of between R75bn and R9bn, about 1-million jobs would be created. These jobs would be long-term as once the initial building had been completed, upgrading and improvements of older housing would be needed.
Two miners still missing

THE search for missing miners at Trans-Natal's Koornfontein colliery continued yesterday, but management conceded there was almost no hope of finding more survivors.

The families of the men who died in the fire were informed and their names released yesterday.

Fourteen bodies were found underground but two remain unaccounted for. A Trans-Natal statement said the bodies would be recovered when conditions allowed rescue teams to proceed underground.

The mine said three people originally thought to be missing were not underground at the time of the incident, confirming that 16 and not 19 employees were trapped.

Koornfontein senior manager Noel Halgreve said walls had been built on the shaft side of the fire, sealing it off from the undamaged section of the underground workings.

Work to seal off the far side of the fire continued.

NUM spokesman Jerry Mapithi said 4 mining houses had become "massacre houses".

He attributed the increase of deaths in the mining sector to the "negligence of management."

"It is totally unacceptable that Trans-Natal, an experienced coal industry, did not secure their underground electrical substations in fire-resistant cages," said Mapithi.

"Mines should be controlled by a new government which takes into account safety regulations and workers' lives."

Halgreve dismissed NUM claims as "assumption", adding that an investigation by the Mineral and Energy Affairs Department into the cause of the accident would begin as soon as conditions underground allowed.

"We will then be in a position to prevent the recurrence of such a disaster," he said.

Production has not yet resumed and it is estimated that 25% of the mine's production capacity has been affected in the short term.

Production at the Gloria shaft will be restored to 82% within a month.
Fire mine could take three months to recover

TRANS-Natal’s Koornfontein coal mine could take three months to recover from the fire two weeks ago that killed 16 workers and halted production in a vital section of the mine, the company said yesterday.

Finance director Louis Smut said Trans-Natal, SA’s largest coal exporter, had still to quantify the likely damage to its earnings. However, the mine had sufficient reserves to meet contractual commitments, he said.

The blaze knocked out Gloria section, a central cog of Koornfontein’s export mechanism accounting for 25% of the mine’s 5-million-ton annual export output.

Smut added that Koornfontein was hoping to “claw back” a large slice of lost production within three months.

But analysts cautioned that establishing a new face at the Middelburg mine could take time.

Irish-Memell Rosenberg analyst Paul Brogan said: “The mine cannot just take people from the burnt-out section. It has to open up a new area, and that’s not an easy job.”

He said it was not clear that Koornfontein would have enough reserves to tide it over.

Gloria accounts for less than 10% of Trans-Natal’s exports, which last year stood at 11.6-million tons.

But the section, which came on stream in 1990, has been used by Trans-Natal as the base for its R220m development programme to redirect the mine towards exports.

Smut added that an investigation into the cause of the fire would start later this month.
Rustplats at standstill

PRODUCTION at the Amandebult section of Rustenburg Platinum Mines has stopped following an illegal strike by about 8,000 workers, according to mineowner Johannesburg Consolidated Investment.

The strikers are demanding immediate payment of their contributions to provident and unemployment funds, death benefits insurance and income tax (2/2).

Negotiations to end the action, which started on Wednesday, continue.
RUSTENBERG Platinum Mines was granted a court interdict on Thursday requiring about 8000 striking workers to return to their shifts.

The workers, on strike since Monday, are demanding the immediate pay-out of their contributions to the provident and unemployment funds, death benefit insurance and income tax.
Health and safety inquiry for mines

A JUDICIAL inquiry into health and safety on the country's mines next month could result in sweeping changes to the Minerals Act.

The commission, to be headed by a chairman and three assessors, will hear arguments and recommendations on health and safety laws by the NUM and the Chamber of Mines.

Albert Davies, an independent international consultant and professor at the University of Cardiff, and rock engineering expert Prof Miklos Salaman from the Colorado School of Mines will assess safety, while Prof Tony Davies, chief director of the National Centre for Occupational Health, will deal with health aspects.

The chairman has not yet been named.

The NUM said yesterday the purpose of the commission was to tighten up health and safety regulations under the Minerals Act with a view to reducing accidents on mines. The union is expected to put forward technical and legal arguments aimed at strengthening and improving existing laws and to change the way in which health and safety are regulated.

Chamber of Mines chief negotiator Adrian du Plessis said the commission could advance the debate between the parties on appropriate legislation. The chamber would make written and oral representations to the commission, but could not give further details.

The NUM said one of its strongest objections to current legislation was the leeway given to mining houses regarding the appointment of safety representatives. "We want safety stewards to be elected and protected by law, which is currently not accommodated in the Act."

NUM health and safety co-ordinator Sazi Jonas said the commission was of the utmost importance as a vehicle for filling loopholes in existing safety laws on mines.

SA's mines lagged far behind technology and safety standards in other mining countries such as Canada, Australia and Britain, Jonas said.

According to the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, there were 7 795 accidents at SA's gold mines during 1993, with 419 miners killed and 7 270 "reportably" injured. And in SA's coal mines during the same year, there were 530 accidents in which 96 workers were killed and 280 "reportably" injured.

According to the NUM, 32 miners were killed during the first three months of this year because of accidents in the coal and gold industries.

An NUM research co-ordinator yesterday said workers' injuries were only reportable after 14 days' absence from work, while in other countries workers were classified as being "reportably injured" after missing only four days.

"Should reportable injury in SA be reclassified as a worker having spent four days off work, the injury rate would more than double," she said.
Miners clash: 1 dies, 10 hurt

WESTONARIA — A man died and 16 were injured in faction fighting here. (2/12)

Police said the fighting at Westonaria gold mine on the West Rand began about 9.30 pm on Saturday, after a group of hostel dwellers asked about the arrest of a colleague.

After the men spoke to the mine manager, whose offices are near another hostel, fighting broke out between residents of the hostels.

Seven of the injured had bullet wounds and three were stabbed.

All the injured were taken to hospital.

Police were not called and the incident was dealt with by mine security.

No one has been arrested, but police are investigating one murder charge and 16 counts of attempted murder — Sapa
Mine death toll
65 in five months

BY BRENDAN TEMPLETON

The death of five miners, struck by a runaway locomotive at the West Driefontein Gold Mine near Carletonville yesterday, took the national mine death toll for the year to at least 65.

The mine’s owner, Gold Fields, said the accident occurred after a rope snapped and the locomotive broke loose while being lowered by a rigger.

Negligence

But the National Union of Mineworkers accused the company of “total negligence” and called for stricter legislation on health and safety on South African mines.

The NUM claims that the high death toll on South African mines — among the highest in the world — is due to management’s disregard for the safety of workers.

But the Chamber of Mines denies this, attributing the high figures to the special conditions of South African mines, the world’s deepest, some extend 3 km into the earth, resulting in huge pressures being built up on the rock face, leading to unavoidable rockfalls and pressure bursts, says the chamber.

NUM spokesman Jerry Mashatad said those responsible for yesterday’s deaths should be dismissed and that criminal charges should be laid.

He said the non-recognition of the NUM at most of Gold Field’s mines enabled management to operate below acceptable safety standards.

The names of the deceased are being withheld until their next of kin have been told.

Of the 65 reported deaths, 18 have died in fires, 10 in rockfalls, 11 in pressure bursts, four in beams and 17 in the Merriespruit slimes dam disaster.
Mine skeletons still a problem

Johannesburg — The skeletons of two miners who went missing underground five years ago at Randfontein’s Estate Gold mine were found in April after management claimed they had “deserted,” the National Union of Mineworkers said yesterday.

The NUM said Mr. Lukama Yekam, 31, and Mr. Pante Mamanu, 43, never returned from their shift at Cook One Shaft five years ago.

It said the families were paid no compensation and there was no communication from owners JCI, since the skeletons were discovered in an old incline at Cook One Shaft.

An inquiry originally set for May 16 had been postponed three times by JCI, the union said.

NUM regional health and safety officer for the PWV, Mr. Charles Freeland, said JCI had shown a “complete disregard” for its workers.

“If it had been white workers that had not reported to the surface, would they have waited five years until their skeletons were discovered and delayed an inquiry?”

JCI yesterday said it regretted that the NUM issued a statement accusing management of acting irresponsibly, adding that the union statement had “numerous inaccuracies.”
SKELETONS are falling out of the cupboard of the mining industry. Unanswered questions surround the discovery of skeletons of two miners who went missing five years ago at JCI's Randfontein Estates Gold Mine on the West Rand.

Although the two disappeared a year apart, they were found underground only metres from each other, in a section of the mine that had not been used for decades. Miners are barred from entering the incline.

This week the National Union of Mineworkers hit out at JCI for postponing an inquiry into the deaths, accusing the mining house of "foot-dragging" since the discovery of the skeletons earlier this year.

JCI spokesman Frans van Rensburg said company representatives would meet the union to find ways of amicably dealing with the problem.

Although the NUM went public only this week, the remains were found in April by workers of an independent contractor who had gone underground to obtain soil samples.

On Wednesday JCI accused the union of trying to discredit it in the eyes of the public, but would neither confirm nor deny the allegations beyond saying "there are numerous inaccuracies" in the NUM's statements.

The union said workers at Randfontein were also angry at mining officials' refusal to grant them permission for a memorial service at the mine's hostal after the discovery of the skeletons. The union said it had discovered that JCI was not planning to compensate the families of the deceased.

"If it had been white workers that had not reported to the surface after work, would you have waited five years until their skeletons were discovered, and then delayed and delayed an inquiry into their deaths?" asked union spokesman Charles Freeland.

Lulama Yekani (31) and Fanti Mamane (54) disappeared in March 1988 and November 1989 respectively.

Mine rescue personnel who searched underground claimed to have found nothing, and a report that was later submitted by shift bosses said the men had "deserted" the mine. According to the mine's rules, a shift cannot be "cleared" if a person is missing until the shift bosses and the mine captain are "satisfied".

In both cases, the NUM charged this week, workers were dissatisfied with the company's explanations and wanted to send their own group to conduct a search. Although their men were allowed to go underground, the union claimed they were refused entry to the site where the remains were found.

Willington Mamane, brother of one of the dead men, said this week he had been told Mamane had "deserted" the mine when he went to inquire about his whereabouts in 1989.

"I still hold a grudge against the white man who said my brother had gone home because he did not want to work any more," he said after burying his brother's remains in the Transtel town of Cofimvaba. He said JCI had given his family R2 000 for the burial and promised to contact him within weeks.
Judge will chair mine safety probe

Mr Justice R.M. Leon has been appointed chairman of a commission of inquiry to investigate the regulation of health and safety in the mining industry. The Chamber of Mines confirmed yesterday that Chamber of Mines spokesman Llewellyn Kriel said the commission was mooted by a mining industry summit in 1992.

"The chamber has complete confidence in the commission and its chairman and believes it is premature to comment further at this stage."

The commission, which is to be chaired by the retired judge and three assessors, begins work on July 18.

The National Union of Mineworkers said the commission was a long overdue opportunity for a review of legislation and regulations controlling health and safety in the mines.

Union says commission is a long overdue chance for a review of legislation controlling health and safety on the mines.

Inadequate

The NUM said it was campaigning through the Miners' International Federation to have mineworkers' policies on health and safety made a convention of the International Labour Organisation, for adoption at the ILO's 82nd conference next year.

It said the Mineral Act governing health and safety at mines was inadequate. Health and safety had been left as a prerogative of management and there were no regulations governing open-cut mining.

The NUM gave the following casualty statistics:

- 53 miners died in mine accidents in the first three months of this year in the PWV.
- 578 miners died in mine accidents last year.
- An average 600 miners died and 8 000 were injured in mine accidents every year.
- 69 000 miners had been killed and more than 500 000 injured since the turn of the century.
- There had been six disasters in the mining industry in the past 10 years. More than 30 miners had died in each incident.

— Sapa
Govt mines safety commission 'long overdue'

MINING health and safety legislation under the Minerals Act was "totally inadequate", the NUM said yesterday.

A commission of inquiry into health and safety appointed by government earlier this year is due to sit on July 18.

The NUM yesterday said the commission was long overdue.

Chamber of Mines spokesman Llewellyn Kriel yesterday said the chamber had complete confidence in the commission, but it was premature to comment further at this stage.

NUM general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe said that in the first six months of this year more than 3,000 workers had been involved in accidents, 213 had died and about 3,222 workers had been injured.

The level of disease caused by the industry could barely be estimated, the union said. Tuberculosis was endemic in the mining industry.

Laws regulating compensation for occupational diseases were race-based until the end of February, the union said, with white workers receiving 13 times more than their black counterparts. The new system, while not racially discriminatory, still paid limited benefits.

The NUM said it was campaigning through the Miners' International Federation to have policies on mineworkers' health and safety made a convention of the International Labour Organisation.
Debating across a vast chasm of mine safety

NUM president James Motlati made a speech two years ago in which he said: "If it is possible to put a man on the moon without injury or disease, then it is possible to put a person safely in a mine."

Chamber of Mines safety and technical services GM Johan Gredt takes another view — the industry is definitely making progress in improving safety conditions, but in the short term the only way to stop fatalities is to stop mining.

On Monday, Judge Ramon Leon enters this sphere, which has been the source of some of SA's most bitter and emotional labour disputes, with his commission of inquiry into occupational health and safety on mines. He will have to listen to claims and counterclaims, allegations and denial, and a range of serious technical proposals before finalising his recommendations to the President on improvements to the existing legislative framework, and to propose how such changes should be implemented in the light of prevailing circumstances.

The Mineral and Energy Affairs Department says 578 miners died in accidents during 1993 — more than one worker per week. (Since the turn of the century, more than 69,000 have died and more than a million have been injured. Arguably there have been, at best, only marginal improvements in safety standards in the last 50 years, judging from average fatality rates. On the other hand, it could be argued that conditions have become more dangerous because of deeper mining.

The NUM, which originally called for the inquiry which was later endorsed by the industry, believes SA's mine safety legislation lags behind international standards, and this is reflected in comparative accident rates. In 1992, the fatality rate on SA collieries was 0.64 per 1,000 workers in service, compared with the UK (0.08), New South Wales (0.43) and the US (0.56).

The chamber says these accident and fatality rates are not comparable. Conditions differ, particularly because of a higher labour intensity in SA and because there are fewer opencast operations in SA. Fatality rates on open-cast operations in SA seem to be unavailable. Gold mines, too, are more labour intensive, often because of the nature of their reefs.

The NUM argues that work practices are unsafe because "production pressures" lead to the compromising of safety standards, and there is an inadequate health and safety training and insufficient worker-union representation on safety matters.

It says the greatest causes of deaths on gold mines are falls of ground and rockbursts.

Gredt says safety standards often depend on specific site conditions in the planning and design stages of a mine. But the application of technology, mechanisation, labour productivity and research obviously also have an effect.

"The underground work environment cannot be easily controlled, and as a result production is more difficult and uncertain, and the risk of accident and injury to those working is greater."

Eleven SA gold mines are operating at depths of more than 2,100m, and about 10% of the workforce is employed at depths of between 3,000m and 3,500m.

The "numbers, qualifications and authority of government mine inspectors are likely to be heavily debated before the commission. Mineral and Energy Affairs deputy director Lionel Nadeau says overseas mining industries have many more inspectors to monitor observance of safety regulations.

In SA, inspectors are forced to spread themselves thin. In 1993, Britain had 89 inspectors per 100,000 miners, compared with 20 in SA.

One mine safety analyst says many local inspectors are also more poorly qualified than their foreign counterparts, but they are nevertheless responsible for a greater number of workers.

The chamber says it believes the commission of inquiry will "make a great contribution to the safety debate.

The NUM expects the commission to take an "in-depth" look at SA mining practices. The union wants more effective hazard control by making regulations more easily enforceable, introducing penalties which encourage safe behaviour and making accident prevention a priority.

The chamber says mining safety is a "very serious issue", and that many research projects are under way. Among these are research into seismology, development of a quantitative understanding of rock mass behaviour near excavation in deep mines, developing improved strategies for mining in highly stressed areas and deep mine layout criteria. In the eyes of the NUM, these projects lack credibility.

The chamber points to improvements in the last 10 years in ameliorating the hazards of rockfalls and rockbursts through the installation of load-yielding hydraulic props, yielding tunnel supports, backfill-decomposing software, environmental computer software, heat stress management, a comprehensive database of the combustion characteristics, of material underground, and self-contained self-rescuers.

Further, the fall of ground campaign initiated by the government mining engineer and the Association of Mine Managers two years ago helped focus employer attention on the importance of maintaining support standards at the rockface.

The NUM, however, says SA legislation and the systems for its enforcement require an "extensive overhaul" to match contemporary international standards, and to provide effective employee participation and regulation in future.
Hidden misery behind SA's golden heritage

As a new government commission prepares to examine mine safety, Vuvo Mvoko speaks to a victim of a mining disaster.

A WARD at the Rand Mutual mine hospital in Johannesburg has, for nearly a quarter of a century, been "home" to paralysed migrant miner Marcelino Kangombe.

In 1971, he had been employed for only seven months when an underground rockburst at the Rooibergl Gelder mine left him paralysed from the neck down, sentencing him to life in an electric wheelchair.

In all the years he has been in hospital, he has not seen his wife or his son, who is now 25 years old.

Kangombe was left at home in Omambela, Angola, and came to look for work in South African mines.

He doesn't even know whether they are alive or dead.

"I pray to God to save at least those two souls, so I can see them when I return," Kangombe said.

The commission of inquiry chaired by retired judge Raymond Leon, consists of the United Kingdom's ex-chief inspector of mines and quarries, Albert Davison, the United States's Colorado School of Mines' Milton Salmon and South African occupational disease specialist Anthony Davison.

After investigating the legal regulations and the commission will make recommendations to the state president on the implementation and enforcement of improvements.

The miners' families want journalists from going underground only two weeks ago, the Chamber of Mines this week laid on a two-day programme for them, to explain the "extremely complicated nature of the NUM's recommendations."

The NUM wants mine safety to override all economic arguments put forward by the mine management, the union said in a statement this week.

In gold mines — which employ 46,000 mostly unskilled workers — most deaths are caused by rockfalls and rockbursts. The union says underground support techniques are inadequate. Some mines work at depths of between 3000 and 3500 metres, more than 30 have died in each of the six underground occupational accidents that have occurred in the past 10 years.

The NUM says workers have declared war on mine management attitude of "work now, complain later."

The union wants workers to have the right to refuse to do work or use equipment they believe is a threat to their safety. This includes exposure to chemicals, radiation, dust, noise and flames.

Mine safety reform could mean considerable cost for the mining industry, but the NUM's position is strengthened by a more labour-sensitive government now in power.

And with the recent realisation of South Africa's responsibility to the International Labour Organisation, the government itself must now adhere to the ILO's conventions on mine health and safety, which the NUM helped to draft.
Miners demand safer conditions

THOUSANDS of men, women and children were injured and 205 lives were lost in the past nine months in the gold mines of the Witwatersrand. In the last week 200 miners have been killed and 200 more have been injured. The mines are still prone to fires and explosions, and the government has failed to act.

Labour Rumbles

Laborers were on strike for better working conditions and higher wages. The strike was supported by the National Union of Miners and the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

Growing In to Deruse a Quick Step new rulers to business lock unions and big

...
Probe into mine safety under way

The first commission of inquiry into health and safety in the mining industry in 30 years gets under way today under the chairmanship of retired judge Mr Justice R N Leon.

The commission, with three assessors — professors Miklos Salamon, Albert Davies and Tony Davies — is to investigate all legal aspects regulating health and safety in the mining industry and make recommendations to President Mandela on improvements to existing regulations.

The greatest challenge facing the commission is whether its recommendations will lead to binding legislation, which will set uniform industry-wide health and safety standards, or whether it will leave these issues to be negotiated with each mining house.

The industry’s two main players, the Chamber of Mines and the National Union of Mineworkers, have different expectations.

The chamber wants the commission to recommend an enabling legislative framework for the regulation of health and safety, while NUM general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe said the commission should set industry-wide standards, instead of recommending agreements to be negotiated with individual mining houses — Sapa
Support for mine inquiry

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — The Chamber of Mines yesterday expressed its support for the Commission of Inquiry into Health and Safety in the mining industry.

Chamber president Mr Jurie Geldenhuys said there was no other issue that generated more concern in the mining industry than the safety and well-being of its 500,000 employees.

About R1.5bn had been spent on safety since the 1970s.

CT/8/2/94
NUM blames management for accidents

JOHANNESBURG — Mine accidents were the product of unsound management systems and weak technical programmes, Mr Edwin Cameron yesterday told the commission of inquiry into the regulation of health and safety in the mining industry.

Representing the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Mr Cameron rejected the Chamber of Mines' approach that accidents were inevitable because all mining contained the risk of human error.

Mr Cameron said accidents could be reduced by worker training and education programmes, intensified research and increased union participation in health and safety matters.

The NUM also stressed the need for a powerful and independent inspectorate to implement and maintain international health and safety standards.

Mr Chris Loxton, representing the Chamber of Mines, said the Mineral and Energy Affairs Department should continue to administer health and safety issues, as their technical knowledge could not be divorced from mine safety.
Chamber suggests consultative body

Call for flexible mine safety reform

The Chamber of Mines has called for flexible regulatory reforms governing health and safety in the mining industry.

Chamber of Mines counsel Chris Loxton, SC, yesterday told the commission of inquiry into health and safety in the mining industry, chaired by Mr Justice Ramon Leon, that the chamber favoured, where possible, regulation of agreements applied at mine level.

The commission — which began yesterday in Johannesburg with assessors Professor Mlondel Salamon, Professor Albert Davies and Professor Tony Davies — is to investigate all legal aspects regulating health and safety in the mining industry and make recommendations.

THE COMMISSION of inquiry into all legal aspects regulating health and safety in the mining industry kicked off yesterday to President Mandela on improvements to existing regulations.

Loxton said parliamentary legislation was the least flexible to change.

He said in his submission the Department of Mineral Affairs should be retained to oversee the implementation of health and safety regulations.

He also called for a consultative body with employers, unions and State representatives with an emphasis on regulatory goals that would include solutions to health and safety.

The legal representative for the National Union of Mineworkers, Edwin Cameron, told the commission that while there were areas of consensus on health and safety issues between the chamber and the NUM, there were also serious differences.

The NUM wanted legislative intervention that would restructure the balance of power in the mining industry.

The appalling accident statistics in the mining industry were a reflection of the socio-economic legacy of apartheid, he said.

— Sapa.
Jobless stay on mine

JOHANNESBURG — Management of Durban Roodepoort Deep gold mine on the West Rand will allow about 4,600 retrenched workers to remain on mine property while they are retrenched by the Department of Manpower, provided the National Union of Mineworkers accepts its retrenchment package.

(213/AR/20/7/94)
Mbweni to receive mine safety proposals

GOVERNMENT Mining Engineer Johan Raath said yesterday he would recommend to Labour Minister Tuto Mbweni that he ratify the International Labour Organisation's convention on health and safety in the mining industry.

Raath said this at a commission of inquiry into mine safety yesterday.

He said the Mineral and Energy Affairs Department would recommend separate legislation to govern health and safety in the mining industry, to replace regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

He said the department concurred with the Chamber of Mines and the National Union of Mineworkers in their suggestion for three-tier regulation of mining health and safety. The three levels are Parliament, an advisory board representing government, trade unions and employers, and forums of employers and trade unions on individual mines.

Raath also proposed a statutory mine qualifications board with representatives of the government, unions and employers to determine competency levels in the industry. The board would set examinations and issue certificates.

Chamber of Mines coal mining expert witness Hendrik van Zyl said 694 coal miners had been killed in accidents between 1994 and 1993.

Falls of ground had caused 33% of the deaths, machines 30%, and fires and explosions 20%.

Van Zyl said there had been five major coal mine accidents in the past 11 years: at Hlobane, Newcastle in 1983, killing 68 workers, at Middlebult, Secunda in 1985, killing 27, at Ermelo in 1987, killing 31, at Middlebult in 1990, killing 54, and at Koomfontein this year, killing 16.

He told the commission that the occurrence of methane gas explosions could not be controlled as they could be caused by a spark from the friction arising from the use of machinery.

Ventilation systems released gas to the surface to prevent it accumulating. Coal miners were given regular lung tests.

NUM counsel Edwin Cameron said SA coal mines had a comparatively high incidence of methane gas explosions. There had been few such explosions until 1944, but a dramatic rise in the 1970s, which could be attributed to mine management promoting productivity at all costs.

Van Zyl said mining methods were more labour intensive and less mechanised before 1944. — Sapa
focus on

The Commission of Inquiry into Health and Safety on the Mines is expected to show up many flaws on the mines. Labour Reporter Ike Motsapi discusses the background to the commission:

(21/2)

The law regulating compensation for occupational diseases was explicitly racist until the end of February this year. Compensation was based on racial classification, with whites receiving as much as 13 times more than their black colleagues.

about 400 000 workers who are mainly unskilled.

In 1992 the mining industry employed over 600 000 workers.

There have been many accidents which claimed many lives over the years.

In gold mines the main killing agents are groundfalls and rockbursts.

These workers face a three-times greater risk of being killed than workers at lesser depths.

For example, in the major gold mining area of the PWV, 53 mineworkers died in accidents in the first three months of 1994 and half of these were rockbursts.

At current accident levels a black mineworker who spends 20 years underground faces a one in 30 chances of being killed and one in two chances of being permanently disabled.

Majadlalad said

In 1993 about 578 mineworkers died in mine accidents. This is more than one worker out of every thousand in the mining industry.

A total of 3,552 mineworkers were seriously injured in mine accidents. This is more than 15 workers out of every thousand.

In 1993 the fatality rate in the South African mining industry increased from 0.62 to 2.33 for every 1,000 employees at work.

The reportable injury frequency rate increased from 5.31 to 5.40 for every 1,000 employees, Majadlalad said.

In coal mines methane gas explosions caused deaths and injuries frequently.

Majadlalad said: "Legislation governing health and safety in the mining industry, the Minerals Act, is totally inadequate to protect workers.

'A critical review of the Act indicates that several rights of workers normally found in the legislation of mining countries throughout the world, and also in several International Labour Organisation conventions are missing.

'Workers should have the right to take part as elected representatives in equal, or greater numbers than management, on mandated safety and health committees for the mine,' he said.

The cost of human lives is shocking. Statistics reveal that over 69 000 mineworkers have been killed since the turn of the century and more than a million have been injured. On average, each year 600 workers die in mine accidents while 8,000 others are left injured.

There have been six major disasters in the last 10 years in which more than 30 workers were killed in each of them.

Lives should enjoy priority

The Chamber of Mines has welcomed the establishment of the commission.

Mr Justice Ramon Leen said: "The Chamber of Mines agrees that "it is of paramount importance that the lives of mineworkers should enjoy priority over all economic arguments".

Mr Llewelyn Kriel, spokesman for the Chamber of Mines, said: however that some of the statistics provided by NUM were misleading.

Kriel said: "Some of the points by NUM are being debated by the commission while some have been refuted.


"The initiative arose from that in May last year the Government agreed to the appointment of the commission.

"The Government called on the industry to agree on the appointment of the chairman.

"It was agreed that compensation would be held back for a separate commission.

"This commission is looking only at the laws governing health and safety at the mines," Kriel said.
Doctor tells of mining risks

Mineworkers entering the industry in South Africa face a one in two chance of being permanently disabled by accident or occupational disease, a medical expert claimed yesterday.

The National Union of Mineworkers expert witness, Dr Jean Leger, was giving evidence in Johannesburg to a commission of inquiry into mine health and safety.

The commission is comprised of chairman Mr Justice Ramon Leon and three assessors.

Leger told the commission a black miner who spent 20 years underground had more than a 50 percent chance of being permanently disabled by accident or occupational disease.

Hearing loss

Between 40 and 80 percent of workers would have noise-induced hearing loss after 10 years, he said.

Leger has completed a doctoral thesis on rockfalls in South African mines.

He said although rockfalls were a major cause of death, they had attracted little research.

Underground work also increased the incidence of silicosis and tuberculosis and the lack of systematic underreporting of occupational diseases in the mining industry, he claimed.

He said inadequate compensation for accidents and disease meant much of the costs were borne by miners and their families rather than the industry.

Since 1983 the government had not published adequate statistics on mining accidents, Leger said. — Sapa
Mining wage talks fail

JOHANNESBURG
Wage negotiations between the Council of Mining Unions (CMU) and De Beers ended in deadlock yesterday, with De Beers refusing to abandon performance-related increases as part of its overall approach.

The CMU, which represents artisans and miners, was demanding that De Beers abandon a system agreed on in 1993 giving employees general wage increases as well as increases based on individual performance.

The CMU wanted an across-the-board 10% increase, while De Beers had offered a basic salary increase of 5.5% with a further three percent for merit increases.

Sapa
'50% of miners face disease, accident'

JACQUE GOLDING

ONE in two SA miners would either contract an occupational disease or fall victim to a mining accident in the course of their careers, the commission of inquiry into occupational health and safety heard yesterday.

Testifying on behalf of the NUM, mining health and safety specialist Jean Leger told the commission that a black miner who spent 20 years underground had more than a 50% chance of being permanently disabled and/or contracting a disease and a one in 30 chance of being killed.

Leger said between 40% and 80% of workers would have noise-induced hearing loss after ten years underground.

Leger, who has completed a doctoral thesis on rockfalls in SA mines, said rockfalls were a major cause of death. Little research had been done although it accounted for a considerable fatalities in coal and gold mines.

The commission also heard that 88 in every 1 000 workers were likely to contract silicosis, caused by inhalation of silica dust, after 15 years underground while an average of 38 out of every 1 000 workers were likely to suffer from tuberculosis after an average of 5 years underground.
Wage deadlock

JOHANNESBURG — Wage negotiations between the Council of Mining Unions and De Beers have ended in deadlock, with De Beers refusing to abandon performance-related increases as part of its overall approach.
Mine health 'a challenge'

The challenge facing the commission of inquiry into health and safety in mining was recommending equitable and nonracial medical intervention in prevention and early detection of work-related disease, specialist physician Neil White said in Johannesburg yesterday.

White told the commission, chaired by Judge Hamon Leon, that medical intervention should embrace retraining or alternative placement options for miners with work-related diseases.

He said miners should be removed from high exposure areas after a time because there was evidence that a driller in a gold mine, for instance, was likely to contract silicosis after 15 years.

White said some miners were infected by tuberculosis before recruitment and their conditions worsened with exposure to mines.

There was an increasing correlation of tuberculosis with length of service on mines, which could be compounded by age.

The relationship between tuberculosis and mining could be attributed to exposure to silica dust.

He said the number of benefits awarded by the Medical Bureau for Occupational Disease to black miners suffering from silicosis was more than four to every 1,000 workers a year.

About 3,000 new cases of silicosis were certified each year, most of them from exposure to gold mining.

White said there should be regular detection tests for occupational diseases, and checks for tuberculosis.
Human error in mine accidents

HumAn error played a significant role in mine explosions such as that at the Hlobane colliery where 66 people were killed in 1983, University of the Witwatersrand mining engineering department head Prof Huw Phillips told a commission of inquiry into health and safety in the mining industry yesterday.

Phillips told the commission, chaired by Judge Hamon Leon with three assessors, that lack of proper training, inadequate supervision and deliberately not adhering to standards all contributed.

Under cross-examination by NUM counsel Edwin Cameron, SC, Phillips admitted statements he had made on the cause of the Hlobane explosion had not been based on a study of the record of the inquiry into the accident.

Phillips said it appeared scientific principles and engineering knowledge existed to prevent most explosions.

"What is needed is a better transfer of knowledge, better training methods and more effective ways of maintaining safety awareness."

He said transport and machinery caused more coal mine deaths than did explosions, but explosions generated more public interest and created anxiety among mine workers.

There was a disproportionate allocation of research funding to explosions, Phillips maintained.

He said that in spite of local research, legislation on explosion protection continued to be based on research findings from countries in the northern hemisphere.

Phillips said there had been regular explosions in SA collieries, and although the average number of fatalities per ton mined or per 1 000 employees had fallen in absolute terms, there had been a worrying increase in the number of fatalities in the past decade.

"Equally telling is the increase in the number of reported ignitions and explosions, from 18 in the 1970s to 49 in the 1990s and at least 24 in the first four years of the 1990s," Phillips said.

He said the ingredients of a disastrous explosion in coal mining were forever present. But the risk could be reduced, he added, by a judicious combination of safety precautions such as good ventilation, properly maintained flameproof enclosures, and the vigilance of a trained and alert workforce — Sapa
Call for mine labour reform

JOHANNESBURG. — The mining industry's migrant labour system needs reforming, a commission of inquiry into health and safety in the industry heard yesterday.

Professor Francis Wilson of the Southern African Labour Development Research Unit said in evidence before the commission that the migrant labour system had deprived workers of a stable social life and caused the break-up of families.

A solution to the problem would be a system whereby workers lived with their families near the workplace, coupled with a living wage.
Mine inspectors need greater skills — NUM

JACQUIE GOLDING

The role of SA's mine inspectorate should be reviewed and mine management had to play a more active role in health and safety issues, former NUM health and safety official May Hermanus said yesterday.

Testifying on behalf of the NUM at the commission of inquiry into health and safety, Hermanus said the commission should make recommendations to change existing legislation. It should urge mine management to be actively involved and receive full training in health and safety issues.

She said "enormous" changes and progress in the industry would be made if the role of inspectors was reviewed and their expertise improved.

Inspections on mine accident scenes, locally, were often casual, with inspectors relying upon the information and documentation supplied by management.

Inspectors needed to have as good, or better, expertise than any other professional in the industry. This could be achieved, in part, if inspectors were shown the way inspectortates abroad operated.

Hermanus said legislation needed to provide the framework for a stable and equal relationship between management, unions and the state if, together, they were to define problems and find solutions.

Too much time was spent by parties whittling away at one another's negotiating positions, Hermanus added.

She told the commission that the role of safety representatives in the industry was not defined and often conflict between union safety representatives and mine team leaders resulted in insufficient time being dedicated to safety investigations.

Hermanus, who took part in the mining industry safety committee — an industry level body that reports to the Mineral and Energy Affairs Department director-general — also challenged the purpose of accident inquiries.

She said inspectors often looked at the immediate cause of accidents rather than at accident trends.

Commission chairman Judge Ramotshweeta, however, said the fault lay with existing legislation rather than with the inspectorate and asked whether Hermanus wanted the commission to make recommendations in this regard.

Government mining engineer James Raith, in cross-examination, challenged Hermanus and denied inquiry documents were not made available to unions for scrutiny. Raith said documents were available to all interested parties.
Radiation levels
‘imperil miners’

ABOUT 10 000 mine workers were currently exposed to radiation levels well in excess of the average levels allowed by the industry, Council for Nuclear Safety representative Bert Winkler said yesterday.

Testifying at a commission of inquiry into health and safety on mines, Winkler said many of the ores mined in SA contained elevated levels of natural radioactive elements — uranium and thorium, which had long radioactive lives — that affected workers’ health.

Protection against radiation could be ensured through sound engineering practice, he said.

He added that the stabilisation of the workforce in the mining industry was likely to see radiation become a severe problem.

Information that 10 000 mine workers were exposed to hazardous radiation levels had been established during a survey conducted in 1992/93 by the Chamber of Mines.

The dangers of radiation, which included the development of lung cancer, had been known for years while controls had only recently been put in place in SA’s mines. Winkler said.

The Chamber of Mines said it desired a situation where mining engineers were trained in nuclear safety to reduce radiation exposure.

Winkler said the world demand for uranium exceeded production, but in the foreseeable future, as the exploitation of commercial nuclear power gathered momentum, local production for commercial nuclear power would increase.

Underground Railway Association president Johannes Vermeulen told the commission that the mining industry had to utilise and maintain rail transport effectively in order to promote safety and efficiency.

Underground Railway Association president Johannes Vermeulen said technical recommendations regarding track structure, layout and construction had to be developed to improve safety.

Research also had to be encouraged, he said.

He added that 35 people had been killed in locomotive accidents last year.

Vermeulen said the mining industry was not in the transport business by choice, but due to the tonnage transported underground being 12% more than that transported on surface track in 1989, the industry was forced to regard its transport system as a necessity.

The length of the industry’s track underground was also greater than that on surface in the whole of SA, he said. Efficiency and maintenance of the track had to be improved.

The mining industry was therefore forced to take transport seriously while trying to make it economical, he said.

Locomotive accidents were rated the third highest cause of accidents underground, after rockfalls and rockbursts.
‘Mining, industry should fund occupational health’

OCCUPATIONAL health funding should not come from the state and the general tax base but the mining industry, National Centre for Occupational Health occupational division director Dr Daniel Rees said yesterday.

He told the commission of inquiry into health and safety in Johannesburg he believed a unitary system was needed for health to accommodate mining and other industries.

Health hazards were not confined to the mining industry.

NUM legal counsel Edwin Cameron said the commission should make recommendations for an occupational health Act separate from the current Safety and Occupational Health Acts.

Rees disagreed with this, but said there should be clear minimum statutory requirements concerning health and safety.

He reiterated the need for a unitary system of health and safety.

Council of Mining Unions representative Karel Cronje said workers should be involved in health and safety issues. More inspectors should be recruited.

Commission chairman Judge Ramon Leon said the problem was the cost of paying more inspectors.

He asked Cronje to make recommendations in this regard.

The Chamber of Mines asked the Council of Mining Unions whether it trained its members in health and safety.

Cronje said training was given to union stewards, the majority of whom were artisans and miners.

When challenged by the Chamber, Cronje said the Council of Mining Unions did not disagree with production bonuses but added that more emphasis should be placed on health and safety issues.
NUM ballot on mine wage offer

JOHANNESBURG — The National Union of Mineworkers is to hold a ballot over the final wage offer from the Chamber of Mines, the union said in a statement yesterday. (Z) 11/14/94

This follows the failure of the Conciliation Board to reach a settlement on August 10 after two days of discussion. Agreement had been reached on several other issues, the NUM said.

NUM moved from a wage demand of 15% to 11%, while the Chamber is offering 9.25% to gold miners and 10% to coal miners. The union said the ballot result was expected in two weeks.

PWV IFP chairman Mr Humphrey Ndlouv has called for racial integration at mining hostels. He was speaking after IFP supporters' demands for the reinstatement of 380 Zulu-speakers fired from a Boksburg mine last month. — Sapa
Mine contaminates wetland

Paul Stober and Eddie Koch

A GOLD mine on the West Rand has contaminated a nearby wetland with radioactive materials, according to a study carried out by mining consultants.

"It is a major environmental problem which has to be dealt with," said Randgold Geology and Exploration head Mark Bristow, who headed the study.

The wetland is located 5km from Kajeso, but Bristow said there was no evidence that residents of the township face any immediate health hazards. "On the basis of what WesGold told us, the water in the wetland is not used for human consumption."

Bristow conducted the evaluation of the mine after First WesGold's recent bid to take over Randgold. Randgold shareholders are set to make a decision on the offer on Thursday.

Randgold is using Bristow's study as part of a campaign to prevent the hostile takeover bid by WesGold's owners, Fraser Alexander. The takeover includes a proposal that Randgold shareholders should purchase the West Rand mine.

The study warned that Randgold would have to pay up to R500 million to rehabilitate the contaminated mine. This would mean containing the water from the mine and preventing it from flowing off the mine's premises, said Bristow.

Another problem identified by the study was the presence of dust, with indications of radioactivity, blowing off the mine. The dust could increase the risk of lung cancer.

The WesGold mine, once the richest uranium producer in South Africa, has two processing plants on its premises. One is contaminated with radioactive material and has been closed; the other is still operating.

According to Bristow, it appears that radioactive waste is leaking from the southern processing plant into the drainage system which ends in the Wonderfontein wetland. During flights to measure radioactivity on the mine and the area immediately surrounding it, Bristow's team found high concentrations of radioactivity in the wetland. In two boreholes on the southern border of the mine, the team found traces of hexavalent chromium, known to be extremely carcinogenic, and concluded that the chrome was "leaching into the property and the neighbouring water-damage system."

First WesGold could not be reached for comment on the report.

The National Union of Mineworkers has entered the fray by demanding that the PWV government launch an immediate investigation into the impact of radioactive waste in the mining industry on the health of workers and neighbouring residents.

The NUM is also opposed to the attempted takeover of Randgold by Fraser Alexander because it regards the latter as a mining group hostile to organised labour. The union says Randgold has a more progressive labour-relations policy and is open to union participation in environmental rehabilitation and other health and safety issues.

"These disclosures of radioactive contamination provide shocking evidence of negligent disregard for the health of employees and residents alike, and an exploitative approach to mining, in which profits are reaped with scant regard for the social and environmental costs," said the NUM general secretary Kgalemwa Motlanthe. The disclosure of the contamination on the West Rand follows a report by the Council for Nuclear Safety (CNS) that about 10,000 workers are being exposed to higher than normal levels of radioactivity in the gold mine industry.

The CNS this month told a commission of inquiry into health and safety on the gold mines that 9,600 workers are exposed to radioactive dust and gas clouds in the workplace that range between 20 and 50 milliSv (milliSieverts) each year. The international safety limit for radioactive inhalation is 20 milliSieverts.

Such exposure could result in a higher rate of lung tumours among miners. The radioactive dust comes from uranium and a substance called thorium. Radon gas defends with these to form a toxic cloud in underground areas and reprocessing plants. All three radioactive substances are byproducts of gold mining.
New mine safety committee proposed

IN ITS closing submission to the inquiry into mining health and safety, the Chamber of Mines yesterday proposed adding a section to the Minerals Act establishing a mining regulation advisory committee.

This tripartite committee would act as an advisory body to the Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister on health and safety matters in the mining industry relating to:

- Determining objectives and the role of regulations,
- Rationalising regulations,
- Analysing the fiscal and social effects of regulations,
- Drafting necessary amendments for technological advances,
- Promoting health and safety at mines with safety guidelines, codes of practice and special rules,
- Reviewing regulatory requirements after major accidents and incidents,
- Assessing and evaluating technical criteria in regulations, and

- To Page 2.

Mine safety

- Reviewing regulations’ effectiveness

The chamber said the commission should be flexible and should concentrate on identifying objectives to be achieved by legislation. Guidelines on health and safety regulations should be formulated within the commission, from which mines could derive their codes of practice.

The chamber clarified its position on self-regulation, saying this was not equivalent to adopting a laissez-faire attitude.

The state, in consultation with employers and workers, should establish a legislative framework within which mine managers would design systems to meet objectives “in a manner best suited” to the mine.

The commission should consist of no more than 15 members appointed by the Minister, with five each from government, mine owner and worker ranks.

Chamber counsel Chris Loxton said although no single reason for the persistence of high accident and occupational disease rates on mines existed, the most significant cause of avoidable accidents was a failure to implement safety procedures.

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Call to give unions say on safety

MINES PROBE Demand for right to take part in decision making:

By Mzimasi Ngudle

The National Union of Mine-workers has put forward proposals on the regulation of mining and health safety on the mines.

The proposals call for workers to have the right to take part in decision making on matters affecting their health and safety.

They also call for workers to have the right to information about health and safety, to refuse to do dangerous work and the right to training on health and safety matters.

Commission of inquiry

These were submitted at a Commission of Inquiry into Mining Health and Safety hearing in Johannesburg yesterday.

This was after lawyers accused the Chamber of Mines of lack of interest in mining health and safety, calling for urgent state intervention in the mining industry.

Closing his argument at the hearing, National Union of Mineworkers counsel Mr Edwin Cameron said the union was concerned that senior mine officials preferred to prevail on Parliament to accept self regulation instead of giving evidence before the commission.

"Where were all the people from the six mining houses comprising the chamber? Why has no one from the mines' health and safety executive given evidence? It is very disquieting," Cameron said.

Cameron referred specifically to Chamber of Mines' president Mr Jurie Geldenhuys who told Parliament last week that the State's regulatory role should be confined to the minimum to ensure safe and orderly production.

On the chamber's insistence on self regulatory measures on mining and health safety, Cameron said "We reject with passion such an attitude and say that urgent intervention is needed in the mining industry."
Leon probe into mine safety ends

THE Leon Commission of Inquiry into Health and Safety in Mines closed yesterday after seven weeks of investigation.

Commission chairman Judge Ramon Leon is expected to make his report by the end of the year.

In his closing remarks, Chamber of Mines representative Chris Laxton criticised the NUM for apparently using the inquiry as a forum to attack the chamber. Little would be achieved if it adopted such an approach in future, he said.

In response to NUM criticism of the chamber’s failure to call in industry leaders, he said he believed the committee was more interested in hearing practical suggestions from people on the rock face than hearing theories expounded by the captains of industry.

He rejected proposals for greater state regulation and said the sector had more regulation than any other industry. The concept of a self-regulating industry could not be rejected just because of a few failures which had required the intervention of government engineers.

The government and union representatives disagreed. The NUM argued that accident levels showed mining houses could not be trusted to regulate themselves.

The Mineral and Energy Affairs Department said health and safety training had been left to mine managements but never implemented.

The union’s references to claims of influence on the part of mines was countered by the chamber’s argument that the industry had had to retrench large numbers of workers over the past few years, and many jobs were still “borderline”.

There was criticism of the chamber’s failure to give the cost of implementing its proposals, but Laxton said this was impossible until final proposals were worked out.

Laxton suggested that the Safety In Mines Advisory Body investigate precisely what it was that made some mines safer than others. The questions of training and risk analysis should be studied.

All parties at the inquiry agreed, however, that changes were needed to the Minerals Act.

They were unanimous in calling for the establishment of groups involving government, employers and employees to improve health and safety and ensure transparency in the mining industry.

Sapa reports that the hearings may have revealed a lack of labour representation in health and safety decisions. Management had made decisions unilaterally, and safety inspectors relied too much on information from management.

It also emerged that the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs employed only two “people of colour” as mining industry inspectors, a black mine inspector and a coloured machinery inspector.

The commission also heard that black miners were allowed to progress only to grade eight, below the level of shift boss.

It was revealed that labour representatives were often excluded from accident investigations, that for years recommendations made by investigators had not been implemented, and that accident reports had not been made public.

The commission heard that the danger of polyurethane in mines had been recognised for 20 years, yet the authorities had done nothing about it.

The parties agreed that methane gas levels at collieries were too high and could be reduced.

Little or no statistics on occupational diseases and accidents were available from the mining houses.

Legislation to correct this was proposed, as well as regulations on rockbursts and rockfalls, respirable dust, noise, truck and tram accidents, radiation and colliery explosions.

Experts pointed out the problems of migrant workers, citing an increase in diseases such as tuberculosis in rural areas when all miners returned home.

The migrant labour system was also blamed for the disintegration of families. There was a proposal to do away with single-sex hostels and accommodate miners’ families near the workplace.
Miners accept pay offer

PORT ELIZABETH — The National Union of Mineworkers accepted the latest pay rise offer by De Beers, but the motor industry strike headed into its fifth week as informal talks closed unresolved yesterday.

NUM said in a statement that the offer was for a pay rise of between 8.5 and 9.7%.

The union said it had reduced its demand from 14 to 12% but De Beers had increased its offer by "only 1%" and refused to offer other benefits.

In a statement, De Beers said the wage offer was final and if accepted by September 8, would take effect the same month.

Motor industry strikes continued countrywide yesterday with a "no comment" from both parties at the negotiation table. Talks will resume today.

• Durban's King Edward VII Hospital yesterday asked families to take their sick relatives home because of the strike by workers — Sapa.
NUM ‘sacrificed’
Zulu miners

The National Union of Mineworkers has not opposed the firing of 350 miners after ethnic conflict at ERPM mine, reports Vuyo Mvoko

A HUNDRED of the Zulu miners fired from the ERPM goldmine were National Union of Mineworkers members whom the union had “sacrificed”, the workers’ representative said this week.

Elias Luthuli was speaking after the failure of a last-ditch application in the industrial court on Wednesday aimed at preventing the dismissal of the 350 Zulus. Bringing the application was the obscure United People’s Union of South Africa (Upasa).

The men were sacked after violent ethnic conflict at the East Rand mine had left two dead and five injured.

Accusing the strongly ANC-aligned NUM of colluding with management and of a hatred of Zulus, Luthuli said the NUM had “sacrificed” over 100 of its members in the dismissed group. “We are puzzled the NUM did not oppose the move,” he said.

NUM general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe confirmed that more than 100 of the fired workers were NUM members. While the dismissals were “regrettable” and “unfair to workers and their families”, he said, there had been clashes at the mine which had resulted in the loss of life.

Motlanthe denied the NUM had “sacrificed” members, saying the Zulus had themselves refused to be integrated with others after the clashes and subsequent “cooling-off” period. ERPM was a marginal mine that could not afford to pay workers who were not working or to be disrupted in endless conflicts.

The Zulu workers had brought a separate hostal for the Zulus as a solution to the conflict, he added. The NUM had fought against the separate hostal proposal.

ERPM defended its “no-fault termination” decision, saying management could only protect lives and property by dismissing the Zulus.

“This was done with regret and in the sincere hope that the ethnopolitical issues that divide our society are resolved without bloodshed,” it said.

ERPM public relations spokesman Martin Fallon said the Zulus were a numerically small grouping compared to the mine’s Xhosa workers and that the NUM had agreed to the settlement. He would not comment on whether he thought the dismissal was an unfair labour practice.

The dismissals were condemned by the South African Council of Churches, which tried to mediate between the warring factions.
10% pay rise for miners

JOHANNESBURG — The National Union of Mineworkers and the Chamber of Mines today agreed on a 10 percent average pay rise.

About 200,000 unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled miners will get rises of between 8.5 and 13 percent.

The agreement covers various improvements in working conditions, including bigger contributions by employers to employees’ provident funds.

NUM president James Motlatsi said he believed the union had done well for its members — Sapa.
JOHANNESBURG — The National Union of Miners and the Chamber of Mines yesterday described this year’s wage agreement — based on an annual wage bill of more than R9 billion — as a good compromise.

This goes some way towards achieving income equity while stimulating growth and investment.

But on the issue of productivity bonuses and profit-sharing schemes — introduced three years ago during an economic crisis in the industry — the parties were widely divergent.

With effect from July 1, the NUM’s 200,000 members at the chamber’s mines will receive increases ranging from 5.5% to 10% for unskilled gold miners and an average 10% for unskilled coal miners, 8% to 9.75% for skilled gold miners and 9.75% to 10% for skilled coal miners.

The agreement affects an additional 200,000 workers on member mines.

The chamber and Council of Mining Unions will try to resolve their wage dispute on Thursday.
Zuma
warning
on AIDS

By Ismail Lagardien
Political Correspondent

AT least 560 000 people — of which 14 500 are babies — could be HIV-positive in South Africa today, Health Minister Dr Nkosazana Zuma said yesterday.

Speaking during her Budget debate in Parliament, Zuma said AIDS was a major threat to the country’s economy and health services.

She said the reported number of people with AIDS as at June 29 this year was 3 909 — of which 930 had died — but said this was not an accurate reflection.

She said many people died without being diagnosed as having the disease and that doctors were “notoriously bad at reporting cases”.

Pregnant women

Zuma said a better indication was a survey done on pregnant women during 1993. At least 4,25 percent of the 15 000 women tested HIV-positive, she said.

“With this background it was estimated that by the end of 1993 about 360 000 people in South Africa were infected. This included 14 500 babies.”

“The tragedy is that in order to prevent this threat a mere R22 million was allocated to Aids prevention. It is obvious that Aids calls not only for a high level of commitment from Government, but also for the introduction of effective measures to ensure that the epidemic is contained. Both of these have been sorely lacking,” Zuma said.

Deaths on gold mines

FIVE miners were killed and 14 injured in rock bursts in several South African gold mines on Wednesday night and yesterday.

Yesterday morning three miners were killed and 13 injured in a rock burst after a tremor at Anglo American Corporation’s Vaal Reefs gold mine near Orkney. The deaths occurred 2.7km below surface.

On Wednesday night two miners were killed and one was injured in a rock burst 2.8km below the surface at Khoof gold mine.

The names of the dead are being withheld until their families have been told. — Sapa.
NUM supports De Beers offer

JOHANNESBURG. — The National Union of Mineworkers yesterday undertook to recommend its members to accept a De Beers wage offer tabled at a Conciliation Board meeting earlier in the day. De Beers said employees would receive increases ranging from R33 to R233 a month, and employees at Venetia mine would receive merit awards out of a fund equal to two percent of the bargaining unit's wage bill. — Sap(2/2)
Mine safety still lacking, says Gencor's Gilbertson

SAFETY was one of the mining industry's major challenges and steps taken to reduce fatalities had been inadequate, Gencor chairman Brian Gilbertson said.

Gilbertson told the Council for Metallurgical and Minerals Conference at Sun City yesterday a new initiative was needed.

The commission of inquiry into health and safety, which drew on the combined insights of the industry, unions and government, was an important step. But there were social issues that had to be addressed before any real progress could be made.

Too many workers were still living in high-density single sex hostels away from their families. There was no possibility of their becoming integrated into the mine's social support systems or identifying with the interests of the mine.

A third challenge was the effective use of the labour force, Gilbertson said.

The local industry should consider methods of building efficient and motivated working teams.

But social issues such as the disparity in education levels among mine workers, the recently structured hierarchy and the lack of a common language were likely to make progress slow and difficult.

The industry had to realise some of the best mineral reserves now occurred overseas. "If SA is to prosper in the long term, it has to be able to operate wherever good reserves are found. The benefits would eventually flow back to SA," he said.

Chamber of Mines president Jurie Geldenhuys said the industry was under great pressure to achieve better productivity from its labour complement.

Poor productivity, caused by public holidays, random strikes and general labour unrest, had led to large increases in gold production costs (212).

A sustained reduction of inflation and the negotiation of realistic wage settlements were important to combat rising production costs.

"The industry requires a stable environment in which to operate, while government needs a strong and vibrant mining sector to support the reconstruction and development programme," Geldenhuys said.
5 killed at Western Deep E

JOHANNESBURG — Five underground workers were killed, five were injured and one is missing in a rockburst at Western Deep Levels' West Mine near Carletonville on the West Rand.

Reports by Staff Reporter, Own Correspondent, Cape Register-AP and UPI.
Six miners killed in earth tremor

SIX miners were killed and five injured yesterday after a localized seismic event 3 200m underground at Western Deep Levels West Mine near Carletonville, Anglo American spokesman James Duncan said.

Four of the injured men were admitted to hospital and were reported to be in a satisfactory condition.

The mine said that it was "cautiously optimistic" it would continue to improve safety conditions at the mine, having achieved 70% backfilling and improved face support in the stopes.

Duncan said West Mine reported 10 deaths to the end of October, seven of which were seismically related.

Last year, 16 deaths were recorded, 16 of which were a result of seismic events.

The names of the deceased would be withheld until their nearest-of-kin had been informed (2122).
Health, safety neglected — NUM

At a Rand-time meeting focusing on health and safety should be created within the NUM, chairman Brenda "Brenda" Nkosi spoke.

At a national health and safety conference in Johannesburg, Nkosi said health and safety were not as important as wages and other conditions of employment, these issues had not been taken seriously as it "rarely appeared on the agenda" of meetings of the NUM executive.

The NUM constitution mandates that the NUM executive considers the role of national committees on health and safety, he said.

The NUM has raised more than 50 health and safety agreements in the industry since the last conference three years ago.

Nkosi was critical of the absence of safety officers in some of the regions.

He lamented the condition that could find a place in discussions of the role of the organisation's leaders regarding health and safety.

"We should engineer and develop our own safety officers, currently employed?"

The union said the rates of accidents in the industry "remain unacceptable". In 1982, 53 deaths were reported and 1,582 injured.
MINES OPPOSE END TO MIGRANT LABOUR

PHASING out of migrant labour for the mining industry — as proposed in the ANC draft minerals policy document — would have catastrophic consequences for the mining industry and for regional stability, a Chamber of Mines spokesman said.

Migrant labour makes up 48.8% of total labour on chamber member gold mines, a total of 263,001 workers at October. Migrant workers come from Lesotho, Mozambique, Botswana and Swaziland.

In Lesotho, remittances of miners make up 55% of the GDP, and in Mozambique about 50%. About 76,000 workers come from Lesotho and 40,000 from Mozambique.

The chamber spokesman said that each miner supported seven to ten dependants, meaning the SA mining industry supported up to 2.8-million people in neighbouring countries.

One source said the phasing out of legal migratory work would see a flood of desperate work seekers pouring over SA’s borders illegally.

He said also it was not easy to find SA workers prepared to work down the mines.

The ANC document states that “the concomitant negative effects (of the phasing out of migrant labour) on neighbouring countries should be ameliorated by entering into joint discussions with them”.

The chamber spokesman said if migrant labourers suddenly had to be replaced, the mining industry would have to make a massive investment in training just to bring new workers to basic levels of competency.

A NUM spokesman said the union did not have a problem with the system of migrant labour, only with its implementation. It believed workers should be allowed to live with their families. She said migrant workers made up a large proportion of the NUM membership.

Meanwhile, the chamber reported in its latest newsletter that a setting of conditions on chamber mines during the September quarter saw an increase in productivity over the June quarter valued at R35.31/kg. It said the increased productivity was not unexpected, given the reduction in output during the June quarter as a result of disruptions related to the election.

But a price underrecovery amounting to R66.61/kg meant mines were left with only a R32.60/kg gain in unit working profit.

The newsletter said the improvement in productivity was linked to the increase in tons produced following the weak June quarter.
MINING - ACCIDENTS

1995

JANUARY - MAY
Miner dies in rockfall

THE MANAGEMENT of West Driefontein mine announced yesterday that an employee died in a fall of ground on Friday.

"Rescue parties are in the process of opening up the area in search of a second employee who is presumed to be dead," it said in a statement. Three other employees suffered minor injuries and were being treated by mine medical staff.
Body of miner recovered

The body of a West Driefontein miner, who went missing after a fall underground on Saturday, has been found and brought to the surface at the weekend, the mine said in a statement yesterday. Three other employees, who had sustained minor injuries in the accident, were treated by the mine medical staff.

The management restated its deep regret at the accident. The name of the deceased was being withheld until his next of kin had been informed.
Accidents increase as mines focus on output

GENEVA — Coal mining is becoming more dangerous in some countries, with up to a million serious accidents and 11,000 fatalities in coal mines worldwide each year, according to a report from the International Labour Organisation in Geneva.

"The drive for improved productivity has sometimes been stronger than the drive to improve and even maintain safety standards," says the ILO report, which was presented to a two-week meeting of industry representatives in the 24-country Coal Mines Committee.

In West Germany, for example, the risk of suffering permanent disability from mining is more than five times the average for all industries.

But what is disturbing, the report says, is that non-fatal accident rates in the coal mines of many countries are no longer declining, in some they are increasing, as is their severity as measured by the average number of days lost.

The major causes of accidents leading to temporary or permanent disability are over-exertion, falls and workers being struck by tools or machinery.

The main causes of fatal accidents are roof falls and explosions.

Australia's safety record is the best, with a fatality rate of 0.1 workers killed per million tons of coal mined. The US with 0.11, Britain with 0.17 and Canada with 0.18 also have good records.

By far the worst conditions are found in Turkey, where a fatality rate of 119 workers per million tons was recorded for the five-year period 1988-93. A single accident there in 1993 killed 270 miners.

Pakistan's Baluchistan province has 29.9 worker fatalities per million tons, Romania 10.3, Morocco 6.12, China 6.1 and Croatia 3.39.

The ILO says privatisation will bring into focus the need to pinpoint responsibility for mine rescue.

In the UK, British Coal has hitherto provided the necessary cover and training facilities for mine rescue. That service will cease one year after privatisation.

The situation in Russia is bad. Production is falling, plant breakdowns and injuries are rising, and there is no money to buy new equipment.

Some mines are reported to have closed their safety departments, and government subsidies are being channelled into wage increases rather than safety measures.

Worldwide, the industry employs about 9.4 million coal miners. This global figure remains roughly constant, but there have been regional changes.

In central and eastern Europe, 300,000 jobs disappeared between 1988 and 1990, while 150,000 jobs were cut in western Europe. But the number of miners increased in China — which now has 5.4 million — and in Russia and Ukraine.

The ILO warns that the employment outlook is not good, particularly in the transitional economies of the former communist bloc where up to a million mining jobs and 2 million related jobs could be lost in the next ten years, or even sooner, if a programme of rationalisation similar to that of western countries is introduced.

Conditions in SA's coal industry were not included in the ILO survey as the Republic's post-apartheid admissions to the organisation came only after it was undertaken — Telegraph pie.
Sapoa, Cosab unite against rising crime

By MAGGIE ROWLEY
Property Editor

THE South African Property Owners’ Association is joining forces with Cosab to mount a major campaign against soaring crime rates, which is threatening business and the country’s tourism potential.

Sapoa president Colin Steyn said yesterday that Piet Liebenberg, CE of Cosab had written to President Nelson Mandela calling for an urgent meeting to address the issue.

“We have many in government who have spoken out against the soaring crime rate we need government to take action and we need it now if it is not spiraling out of proportion.”

Liebenberg and Sapoa CE Brian Krechmann will spearhead the initiative on behalf of the interests they represent and invite other concerned bodies to join them in formulating a strategy and a united business front to insist that action is taken.

Steyn said Cosab and Sapoa would be holding a national workshop to get input from business and other concerned bodies and together try and arrive at solutions to the massive problem.

“But in the end it is up to government to act and act firmly.”

Steyn stressed it was not just white middle class people or business being affected.

“People regardless of race, creed or colour are victims of this appalling culture of crime developing in South Africa. The time has come for business to take steps, to implement strategies in order to combat the ever increasing lawlessness prevalent in South Africa.”

Compounded the crime problem, he said, was the running number of illegal immigrants who were unemployed and a solution to this problem also needed to be found.

SA develops key mine support system

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa has reaffirmed its position as a world leader in mining technology with the development of a revolutionary fibreglass support system capable of withstanding underground pressures exerted in deep level mines.

A statement issued by the developers yesterday said the new system, which included a much larger load spreader for hydraulic props used to support the hanging walls of stopes, was likely to provide increased protection for miners against rockfalls resulting from seismic activity.

A Verwoerdburg-based consulting firm, MMS, was commissioned by Anglo American’s Western Deep Levels to develop the new headboards which improved the effectiveness of hydraulic props — Sapa.

SA’s November mineral exports

JOHANNESBURG — The following shows preliminary figures for South Africa’s exports of gold, coal, diamonds, platinum group metals, silver, chromite, copper, lead, manganese ore, zinc, uranium ore and cobalt for November 1994, received here yesterday from the Minerals Bureau of the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs.

The commodity is followed, unless otherwise stated, by the export volume for November 1994, then in brackets the export volume for October 1994 and November 1993, then export value for November 1994 in rands and dollars.

Gold: Production (export volume not available) 48,424 kg, R2,124bn ($600m)

Platinum group: 14,361 kg, R491m ($127.4m)

Silver: 25,072 kg, R11,42m ($3.22m)

Coal: 3,921 million tons, R335.01m ($86.5m)

Diamonds: Production (export volume and value not available) 805,789 carats (995,913/843,159 carats)

Chromite: 46,223 tons (42,927/18,889 tons), R9,35m ($2.94m)

Copper: 6,694 tons (7,766/8,19 tons), R57,61m ($16.27m)

Lead (metall-in-concentrate) 10,131 tons (8,937/15,486 tons), R11,60m ($3.12m)

Manganese ore: 93,190 tons (97,364/57,433 tons), R24,94m ($7.94m)

Zinc (metall-in-concentrate) 2,514 tons (October 1994 production 6,929/November 1993 exports 2,540 tons), R2,55m ($720,375)
2 miners killed in Free State rockfall

Two miners were killed by a rockfall 1350m below surface at Anglo American’s President Brand mine near Welkom in the Free State early on Wednesday morning. Their names are being withheld until their next of kin have been informed. — Sapa
Botha denies delay over mines safety report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHANNESBURG: The Leon Commission's report on health and safety in mines, which has led to a war of words between Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs Mr Pik Botha and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), has been handed to President Nelson Mandela who is expected to respond to it "shortly."

Mr Botha said in a letter to the union on Friday that the report, which the union alleged had been delayed since last August by Mr Botha's "unavailability," had been handed to Mr Mandela on March 17, four days after he learned that it was ready.

Mr Botha has asked the union to issue a statement correcting "the wrong impression" that he had delayed the release of the report.
Gold mining fatality rate at a new low — chamber

FATALITY rates for the gold mining industry last year were the lowest recorded, according to provisional statistics released by the Chamber of Mines yesterday.

Fatality rates on SA gold mines totalled 372 workers, a rate of 0.96 fatalities per thousand, 11% down on the 1993 figure. The previous best figure was in 1988 when the fatality rate was 0.97.

Chamber spokesperson Llewellyn Kriel said falls of ground accounted for the majority of deaths, but there were 47 fewer deaths and 159 fewer reportable injuries from rock bursts and rock falls.

Although it was too early to draw firm conclusions from the figures, he anticipated that, among other factors, the increased use of backfill and the concentration on rockburst hazards in the industry’s “safe face” campaign could further reduce fatalities from rock bursts.

Despite the decline in the fatality rate, chamber consultant John Stewart said trends in mining injury and fatality rates had been disappointing over the past decade.

Speaking at the sub-Saharan oil and minerals conference, he said a new approach was required to bring about further improvements in health and safety.

As the industry in SA had a number of marginal operations, any increase in working costs would have a direct effect on the number of jobs at risk. He said a 20% increase in SA gold mining working costs would cause as many as 130 000 jobs to be associated with uneconomic mining.

Experience pointed to improvements in mining technology, methods and working practices, and the elimination of human error as the most promising avenues for major improvements in mine safety.

National Union of Mineworkers regional health and safety chairman Thomas Qhena said the first step toward real progress would be participation by workers in the shaping of safety policies. It was not possible to make mines safe by tinkering with regulations or increasing the number of mine inspectors.

He described the SA mining industry as having one of the worst safety records of the Western world. 

MICHAEL URQUHART
Leon commission sets guidelines for improved safety

The Leon commission of inquiry into safety and health in the mining industry yesterday called for urgent attention to be given to reducing the number of deaths, injuries and disease in the industry.

It has recommended the drafting of a new Health and Safety Act, restructuring enforcement agencies such as the mine health and safety inspectorate, establishing tripartite health and safety committees and appointing representatives on mines.

The commission, chaired by Judge Ramon Leon, was asked to investigate the regulation of health and safety in the industry, and to recommend improvements.

It heard evidence from the NUM, Chemical Workers' Industrial Union, Sasoal, the Chamber of Mines and the Mineral and Energy Affairs Department from July 18 to August 24 last year.

The parliamentary mineral and energy committee would help to process comment from interested parties, which had to be submitted by May 15.

Committee chairman Marcel Golding said the commission’s recommendations provided an adequate framework to address the problems in health and safety.

The recommendations had to be implemented as soon after comment from stakeholders.

The commission recommended that the new Act “should be devoted to regulating health and safety in the mining industry” by a tripartite body, the mining regulation advisory committee. The new legislation should ensure that the existing imbalance between health and safety was corrected.

It also recommended the establishment of a mine health and safety council chaired by the government mining engineer and consisting of an equal number of representatives from employers, employees, mine officials and the department. The council would advise the Minister on all matters relating to health and safety and enforcement of legislation.

The commission proposed that health and safety committees consisting of an equal number of management and elected workplace representatives be established by the mine manager after consultation with workplace representatives.

Mine safety

between the type of accommodation provided and the health of mine workers. It recommended that the industry move towards family housing, but in the meantime upgrade hostels.

For example, where a mine had a life of 10 years or more, within five years hostels had to be improved to accommodate eight men per single room.

In terms of matters for further investigation, the commission said that in attempting to improve health and safety, communication had to be improved. In that light mining houses who could “move forward the national initiative in adult education” were requested to do so.

Emphasis was also placed on training with recommendations that training programmes be revamped to re-emphasise health and safety.

Other recommendations included giving prior notice to interested parties, including the NUM, for all in loco inspections of accidents; no onus of proof being placed on the accused in mining prosecutions; regulations to provide for regular health inspections of facilities on the mines; efforts to control the spread of tuberculosis, and efforts to conduct a thorough examination of practices in areas in which HIV was prevalent to ensure “that the central scheme proposed has the best chance of success”.

The commission suggested research conducted to prevent accidents and occupa-
tional diseases directly attributable to exposure should be funded by levies collected from the mines on the basis of a health risk factor. This would be achieved by establishing a data collection system to facilitate the mine calculation of the health risk factor.

Reports of accidents should be published and attention should be given to collating data on health and safety, which should be made available to the public.

Reuter reports that the commission said the presentation of statistics on mining accidents over the past decade left much to be desired, and there was no reliable information on diseases caused by the industry.

The commission said more than 60,000 mine workers died in the first 93 years of this century and more than 1-million had been seriously injured.
Mining safety inquiry ends

AN inquiry into mining health and safety, headed by Mr Justice Leon, had completed its work and comment should reach the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs by May 15, Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Ptk Botha said yesterday.

The report by the Commission of Inquiry into Safety and Health in the Mining Industry was of great interest to the mining industry, he said in a statement.

Both the National Union of Mineworkers and Chamber of Mines had approved the commission's assessors. The report is available from Mrs M Mulder, Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Room A8034, DRC Synodical Centre, 234 Vaalge Street, Pretoria (Tel 012 317-9055), at a cost of R60 each.

Interested parties are invited to submit written comments to the Director-General (for attention Mr T M Doyle), Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Private Bag X59, Pretoria, 0001, by 15 May 1995.

The commission was officially announced on May 6 last year. The Parliamentary Mineral and Energy Portfolio Committee will help process comments and evaluate the report.

Botha said he would ask the committee for its recommendations — SA Press Association
Legal action likely after Merriespruit finding

Mine faces huge damages claims

SHIRLEY WOODGATE and SAPA
MINING consultants Fraser Alexander and Randgold's Harmony Gold Mine, whose officials were yesterday found responsible for the 1993 Merriespruit slimes disaster, now face the possibility of multimillion-rand damages claims.

Prominent lawyers say massive legal action will probably be instituted against the two organisations after Mr Justice Dirk Kotze yesterday found six staff employed by the two organisations criminally liable for the disaster which claimed 17 lives on the night of February 22 last year.

The 192-page findings of the commission of inquiry headed by Mr Justice Kotze and to which evidence was heard over two days in Pretoria's Magistrate's Court
Theuns Linde employed by both Fraser Alexander and Harmony Gold

See Page 3

Mine, and senior official, Johan Mouton, the mine company's deputy manager in charge of slimes dams, regional manager Frans Botha, foreman A.J. Lys, superintendent R. Bantjes and B. Anton-Jones were found guilty of gross negligence.

Mr Justice Kotze said the families of the 17 victims could charge them with manslaughter. If this happens, Harmony Gold Mine and Fraser Alexander will also be in the firing line.

Earlier the court was told how the officials had lied and in some cases colluded over their evidence. Mr Justice Kotze accused top officials of ignorance, dereliction of duty, laziness and incompetence.

He said warning signals had been ignored for almost two years. When the dam wall eventually burst, Mouton had tried to hide in his bathroom.

AFTERMATH: A year after a torrent of slimes avalanched through the streets of Merriespruit, municipal worker Fip Mabula sifts through the rubble of a devastated house. Large-scale legal action against Harmony Gold Mine is thought likely.
The dams had disappeared. Continual pumping into the dam had resulted in the disappearance of the freeboard on the northern side of the dam. The wall was permanently wet and stress signs had been visible long before the catastrophe. The last straw was a heavy shower of rain.

No action had been taken to halt dumping or to close down the dam, Mr Justice Kotze said. A year before, not far from Murrin Murin, there had been a slimes dam catastrophe at the Saaiplaas mine in the Free State. Both mines are owned by Randgold.

Gary Rae, chairman of Fraser Alexander's tailings division, said yesterday his company sympathised deeply with all who had lost family, friends or property in the Murrin Murin disaster. The findings of the inquiry would be carefully considered by his company, which was reserving its rights with regard to any further proceedings.

Fraser Alexander had joined Harmony Gold Mine in establishing a R10-million fund to expedite the settlement of claims for uninsured property losses.

Dan Jordaan, general manager of Harmony, said the loss of life and property in the Murrin Murin disaster was a matter of abiding sorrow to all associated with the mine.
Mine firms may pay R70-m over slime deaths

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Mining consultants Fraser Alexander and Randgold’s Harmony Gold Mine are bracing for more legal battles after six company officials were held responsible for the 1993 Mellespruit slime dam disaster.

Seventeen died when a slime dam wall burst, sending an avalanche of sludge up to 4m deep through the village.

Expert opinion was that claims arising from the disaster would not exceed R70 million.

In the Virginia Magistrate’s Court, Mr Justice Dirk Kotze said the families of the victims could now lay charges of manslaughter.

Officials cited were Theuns Viljoen, employed by both Fraser Alexander and Harmony Gold Mine, Johan Mouton, the mine company’s deputy manager in charge of slime dams, regional manager Frans Botha, foreman A J J Uys, superintendent R Bantjes, and B Hetton-Jones.

The judge said sludge was dumped in spite of repeated warnings of a pool of water forming above the village.
Radioactivity found in mines

Radioactive contamination had been found at 30 sites in the Gauteng and Free State goldfields, the Council for Nuclear Safety (CNS) said in its annual report which was tabled in Parliament yesterday.

It said another eight sites in Phalaborwa were contaminated.

The CNS said surveys of 105 sites were made last year after Britain rejected a contaminated consignment of scrap metal from a South African company.

"On 15 sites there were contaminated items which required removal in a controlled manner."

The mining industry gave R5 million for investigations and control measures at sites elsewhere in the country, the report said — Sapa
‘Faulty’ gear endangers miners

JOHANNESBURG—Mine unions said yesterday over 40 000 miners could be at risk because of faulty safety equipment.

A statement by the National Union of Mineworkers, the Mine Workers Union, the Council of Mining Unions and the Underground Officials Association of SA said some “self-rescue” packs used in areas of fire risk were unreliable.

These packs contain chemicals which convert into breathable oxygen when the pack is activated.

The unions said tests conducted over the past three years had shown that one brand of the packs, the cheapest and most widely used, deteriorates almost immediately underground.” — Reuters
More than 40 000 miners were at risk because a cheap safety device which provides emergency oxygen was faulty, mining unions claimed yesterday. They said the defective device, called a self-rescuer, deteriorated underground. The unions called on the Government Mining Engineer to instruct all mines to review their escape procedures. A Chamber of Mines spokesman said the defects found presented serious problems not immediately solvable.

Sapa
Two dead in W Tvl mine rockfall

Two others were injured and were recovering in the mine's hospital.

The rockfall, 3000m below surface, followed a seismic event measuring 3.6 on the Richter Scale — Sapa.
Rockfall kills four gold miners

Four miners were killed in a rockfall at Freegold's Western Holdings gold mine near Welkom in the Free State yesterday. A miner injured in the accident was in a satisfactory condition. Mine owner Anglo American Corporation said two bodies were found early yesterday and the bodies of two men who had been missing were found by rescue workers in the afternoon. The rockfall occurred at the mine's No 4 shaft about 1900m below surface after an earth tremor measuring 2.5 on the Richter scale — Sapa.
Mine rescue-pack makers react to union’s criticism

SEVERAL self-rescue pack (ResQpac) manufacturers supplying the mining industry have reacted strongly to reports that mineworkers were being supplied with cheap and ineffective packs, because of the impression that self-rescuers were of similar quality.

ResQpac’s, in terms of the Minerals Act, are supplied to miners who work in areas in coal, gold and platinum mines where the risk of fire is high.

According to the Mineral and Energy Affairs Ministry, about 129 700 units which are in use in the industry were being supplied by six companies.

Drager South Africa, one of the largest suppliers, said it was aware that some competitor units had been functioning unsatisfactorily. But the statement made by the unions was “generalised and undoubtedly does not apply to all”.

The ministry, in response to claims by mining unions that it had known about the problems for a number of years, said problems with the units became known in 1993, but the seriousness of the problem only manifested itself at the end of 1994.

In 1993, a research project under the auspices of the Safety in Mines Advisory Committee (Smorac) was conducted on ResQpac and the results forwarded to the relevant mines.

“It was during this period that certain makes of these units manifested problems with their ability to scrub carbon dioxide,” the ministry said.

The ministry said the original equipment manufacturers were notified and modifications made, but some units continued to display similar problems.

The department took action to address the problems, the ministry said.

The ministry said “self-rescuers are a second line in the defence against the presence of noxious gases”. There was a fully fledged, effective and operating carbon monoxide detection system which warned miners immediately.
EMPLOYEES of Rossing Uranium are to have greater say in safety measures after an agreement between management and the Mineworkers' Union of Namibia. Management and the union said the settlement was a first for the Namibian mining industry, but "not perfect."
Lokomotive plunges six levels on to cage, 100 men feared dead

Orkney mine disaster

Up to 100 miners are feared dead at Anglo American's Vaal Reefs gold mine near Orkney and rescue efforts are being hampered by damage to the shaft after a locomotive and carriage plunged down and crashed into a lift cage laden with miners.

Miners spokesman James Duncan says rescue workers have reached the mine and some are being trapped in the shaft, numbered 5, which has reportedly been damaged to the double-decker cage that was carrying about 100 miners.

The locomotive and carriage, a train for carrying both miners and equipment, were on Level 56 when they smashed through a mine safety device.

They fell on the laden cage on Level 55, about 1,700m underground. The number on which the cage was suspended snatched and plummeted more than 500m to the bottom of the shaft.

The locomotive was not damaged when it began to move on Level 56 and the shocked miners were told to remain under sedation in hospital. He was being questioned about the accident as soon as possible.

About 400 workers working underground at number 2 shaft at the time of the accident were brought to the surface via number 5 shaft.

Mine management expected to know later this morning the identities of the people in the cage.

Duncan said he knew the four lines of defense the locomotive crashed through were a boom, a vertical steel bar, a trap hole and gates.

The locomotive dropped over the edge by 56 level and collided with the cage full of miners, causing the rope to snap and sending the cage hurtling to the bottom of the shaft.

The locomotive and carriage are jammed in the shaft. The mine manager's son may have been killed and the trapped miners have reportedly been found alive. There are apparently no signs of life.

Over 8,000 casualties in thousands of mine accidents last year

According to figures released to Parliament this month, 485 people died and 7,899 injured in 8,039 accidents on South African mines last year. The mining Commission into health and safety on the mines - the first of its kind in more than 30 years - sat for six weeks from July 1994. It is now driving miners to task over poor health and safety records and recommended a new health and safety bill.

The locomotive could not have acted as it did had it been properly controlled, Botha said.

He added that he had "learned with deep shock" of the accident.

On behalf of the South African government, Botha wished to express his deepest sympathy and deepest regret to the families of those who died and those who have yet to be confirmed as to whether or not they have lost anyone close to them.

Rescue team of 12 went down here

The Vaal Reefs mine is deserted.

"'Hit squad' intercepted on mission

BY ANNA COX

Parktown police arrested four men believe to be 'a hit squad' on its way to attack a Johannesburg taxi rank yesterday.

Parktown police spokesman Warrant Officer Ian Loubsler said the men were arrested in Emalahleni when they were stopped at a roadblock.

They were carrying illegal firearms and had a "hit list" of 20 registration numbers for taxis belonging to members of the Alexandria Taxi Association (ATA), Loubsler said.

Police believe they could be connected to the assassination of an Alexandria taxi driver in Ryde Park on Saturday.

The ATA and the Fransure Taxi Association are disputing the route from Randburg to Vood Road in Johannesburg.

Alexandria drivers went to the Parktown police station on Monday and demanded protection. They gave the police descriptions of cars possibly involved in the shootings.

Police patrols were placed on the roads and cars fitting the description were randomly stopped at roadblocks.

The men arrested were driving a stolen car.

We believe this was a hit squad," Loubsler said.

Four men were due to appear in court today.

The following individuals are involved in this mission.

- Vaal Reefs
- Level 56 (1676m)
- Level 59 (1778m)
- Level 62 (1859m)
- No 2 Shaft
- No 5 Shaft
- Four safety devices:
  - Boom
  - Vertical steel bar
  - Trap hole
  - Gate

Everything crashed to bottom of shaft.
Just body bags of human flesh.
NUM blames Anglo for 'inexcusable' tragedy

ORKNEY — The National Union of Mineworkers says there is little chance of finding survivors of the Vaal Reefs mine disaster.
NUM president James Molatsi, who blamed the disaster on mine owners Anglo American, yesterday demanded compensation for the families involved. The accident was inexcusable as the company had been negligent and had not observed safety precautions, he alleged.
"More than 100 people — who are breadwinners and who have families — cannot be seen anymore. This is a great tragedy."

Molatsi said it would be a matter of procedure for the union to file a complaint with Anglo American.
However, "there is nothing to inquire about — they cannot explain why this happened."
The entrance to the mining area displays a sign reading "safety is our number one concern."
The ANC meanwhile has backed the call by Cosatu for the disaster to be investigated by an independent commission.
The ANC said that since 1909 the country had had 13 major mine disasters, and "this was too much."

There was an urgent need for a commission into mine safety and for new, stringent regulations "to bring the sorry train of death and injury to an end."
"To this end the ANC supports the call by Cosatu for an independent commission of inquiry into the Vaal Reefs mine disaster to determine safety standards and whether any person is culpably liable."
The government should consider declaring a day of mourning, it said.
— Sapa
Accident highlights the dangers of deep mining

THE disaster at Vaal Reef's gold mine in which up to 100 people were feared killed on Wednesday night highlights the dangers facing workers in some of the world's deepest mines.

Mining companies say more than 69,000 miners had been killed and more than 1 million injured in SA mines between 1911 and last year.

The Mineral and Energy Affairs Ministry said yesterday 453 people were killed in mine accidents last year, compared to 588 in 1993.

The number of deaths in SA mines has shown a steady decline since 1993 when the industry said between 700 and 900 miners were killed and 15,000 injured in mine accidents every year.

Some of the worst accidents in recent years are:

☐ 1993 Methane gas blast at Middelbult colliery, east of Johannesburg, kills 53,
☐ 1999 Methane gas explosion in Ermelo, east of Johannesburg, kills 35 workers,
☐ 1997 Earth tremors rock the Western Deep Levels and the Buffelsfontein gold mine, killing 12 miners,
☐ 1987 Explosion kills 67 at St Helena mine, Welkom,
☐ 1987 Methane gas explosion at Ermelo colliery kills 34,
☐ 1988 Fire kills 177 at Ramcos gold mine,
☐ 1983 Methane gas explosion at Hlobane colliery kills 68, and
☐ 1969 Thirty dead in lift cage fall at Vaal Reefs — Sapa-Reuters.
Politicians, businessmen and unions call for urgent inquiry

POLITICAL leaders and the mining industry yesterday expressed shock at Wednesday night's disaster at the Vaal Reefs gold mine near Orkney in the Northwest, in which up to 100 people are feared to have been killed.

An underground locomotive and carriage plunged down the mine's number two vertical shaft, crashing on to the top of a cage carrying a full load of night-shift workers.

President Nelson Mandela said he was deeply shocked by the news of the disaster.

"It is in a very shocking affair — but I would like to reserve comment until the facts have become clear," Mandela said at a news briefing.

He said he had discussed the disaster with both ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa and Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pak. Robha Botha.

Botha said he had "learned with deep shock of the accident."

"On behalf of the SA government I wish to express my deepest sympathy and fellow human feeling with the next of kin, many of whom have yet to learn whether or not they have lost someone dear to them.

"The regional director of my department is on the scene."

Botha said the investigation into the cause had already started and "will be made known as soon as the investigation has been completed.

"I am making arrangements to visit the mine today to personally assure myself of the situation."

The Mineworkers' Union called for an independent investigation into the disaster. Union secretary Flip Botes said the inquiry had to be launched as soon as possible.

Coatse general secretary Sam Shilowa blamed inadequate safety standards for the disaster.

He also called for an expert independent inquiry.

Mineral and energy affairs select committee chairman Marcel Golding said the accident demonstrated the "urgent need to enhance safety reform and minimise deaths in the mining industry" and added his voice to calls for an urgent inquiry.

Northwest premier Pops Molefe said mine owners had to re-evaluate safety in light of the tragedy.

Chamber of Mines president Alash Meuro expressed "deep shock" and extended condolences on behalf of the chamber's members to the bereaved.

He said the chamber and its members had offered their full support to the Vaal Reefs recovery operations.

CP leader Ferdi Hartzenberg expressed sorrow and extended condolences to friends and relatives of the victims on behalf of the CP.

The NP was shocked by the tragedy, mineral affairs spokesman Helt Hansen said.

The NP trusted that the cause of the accident would be established swiftly, because the mining industry could not accommodate such incidents, he said.

"It is necessary for the mining industry and for the national economy that the industry maintains an unbreakable safety record."

The Leon commission of inquiry into mining safety, which was finalised in March, was very timely and the NP trusted all role players would urgently co-operate with the Mineral and Energy Affairs Department to implement its recommendations.

DP leader Tony Leon expressed his "shock and deep regret.

"Our hopes and prayers are with the trapped and injured miners and we extend our deepest sympathies to the families of those who have been killed," he said.

The appalling accident had highlighted Parliament's need to give urgent and sustained attention to the implementation of the Leon commission's report, Leon said.

People concerned at the possible involvement of a relative in the accident can call the 24-hour hotline for assistance on (015) 478-3374 — Sapa.
The problem is the safety of manpower. The
commission's report is that the mining is
not safe. The report is based on the
observation of the mining operations.

The report concludes that the mining is
unsafe. The report also recommends that
the mining operations be stopped.

The report concludes that the mining is
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commission recommends that the
mining operations be stopped.
Mandela calls for national mourning

Special motion of condolence supported by all parties in the House
'SA mining riskiest in the world'

Mining in South Africa is more dangerous than anywhere else in the world, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), representing most of the country's miners, claimed yesterday.

Laura James, an NUM unit co-ordinator, claimed there were two reasons for this: the country's gold mines are far deeper than anywhere else in the world, and, during the apartheid era, the safety of miners was considered secondary to profits.

However, the Leon Commission was recently set up to investigate safety in mines and the NUM had made a major input.

While South Africa does not hold the record for the highest death toll — a record 1,549 workers were killed in one accident in China in 1942 — it overshadows other countries in the number of major disasters that have occurred.

Star 12/5/75
47 Bodies Recovered

-message out
rules delayed
another

The Star
FRIDAY MAY 12, 1995
R.1.50 (Subscription R.1.10) VAT IN
By Joshua Raboroko

A TOTAL of 424 workers have died on the South African mines in the past four months alone.

This figure brings to 3,288 the number of mineworkers killed in underground disasters in the country over the last five years.

Anglo spokesman Charmaine Russell said 53 miners have died in the corporation’s gold mines in the period from January 1 to May 11, 1995.

Disasters on gold mines alone have claimed the lives of 2,265 workers in the past five years, Chamber of Mines spokesman Mr. Louis Allee Knell said yesterday.

According to figures released in Parliament earlier this month, 485 people died and 7,899 were injured in 8,039 accidents on the mines last year.

Safety on the mines 12/5/95

The Leon Commission into health and safety on the mines—the first of its kind in more than 30 years—sat for six weeks from July 1994.

It took mining houses to task over poor health and safety records and recommended that new bodies, drawn from mining houses, the state and unions, draft a new health and safety act.

Some of the major disasters

- **1909** — 152 people killed in Zach’s Gold Mine
- **1960** — 435 die in Coaldred in the Free State
- **1969** — 80 die in Buffelsfontein, 160km south of Johannesburg
- **1980** — 30 killed at Vaal Reef
- **1983** — 58 die in Hlobane in KwaZulu-Natal
- **1986** — 177 killed in Kinross, in the Eastern Transvaal
- **1987** — 63 die in St Helena
- **1990** — 10 killed at Kloof Gold Mine
- **1991** — 21 killed in Vaal Reefs in Orkney in 1991
- **1991** — 169 killed at Western Deep Levels
- **1993** — 53 die in Middlesbalt near Spoilsburg
- **1995** — 10 killed at Nhulala coal mine
Grisly work carries on

From Page 1

If necessary, Botha said, he would ask President Nelson Mandela for an independent commission of inquiry.

Anglo American Gold Division head Clem Sunter said it was difficult to give a precise body count.

"It's impossible to say at this point because hardly any whole bodies have been recovered. This particular accident has left me devastated."

National Union of Mineworkers president James Mofokate said after an excursion down the shaft "I am angry. I believe management was negligent in installing safety measures."

In Parliament, MPs passed a special motion of condolence.
Maned Bodies

Rescue workers dig out mutilated remains of the miners who died underground.

NEWS

Sympathy for dead miners

By Abdul Malik

Hauled from mine

SOMETHING FROM MAY 12, 1995

(2/12 32/5/21

...
SAFETY MECHANISMS FAILED TO STOP 500m DEATH PLUNGE

Govt to probe mine disaster

About 13 bodies had been recovered by early this morning and a further 13 were still accounted for. Mr. Moodi said that a major task remained was to retrieve the bodies and identify them.

Mr. Moodi said that a major task remained was to retrieve the bodies and identify them. He said it was impossible to recover the bodies because the mine was being flooded with water from a nearby stream. The mine, he said, was "a tragedy of the first magnitude."
Autumn is here in all its glory

For the Autumn...
The grim secrets of No 2 Shaft

Madame Denieuve breaks ice to reveal warmth

ST LUCAS: Madame Denieuve, South Africa's most famous hostess, has taken up a new role as a special envoy for the government of South Africa. Her mission is to promote peace and understanding between the white and black communities. Madame Denieuve, who is known for her charm and grace, has been chosen for this important role due to her reputation for fairness and impartiality.

PRETORIA: The South African government has announced that it will introduce a new policy to address the ongoing crisis in the country's mining sector. The policy, which is aimed at improving safety standards and reducing the number of accidents in the mines, will involve a combination of new regulations and increased investment in safety equipment.

JLNM: The Johannesburg Stock Exchange has experienced a significant rise in the value of its shares in recent weeks. This has been attributed to a number of factors, including a strong economy and increased demand for mining stocks. The exchange has also seen a rise in the number of new listings, with several companies seeking to take advantage of the buoyant market.

KLM: The Diamond Board has announced that it will be hosting a major conference in London next month to discuss the future of the diamond industry. The conference, which is expected to attract a large number of industry experts, will focus on issues such as sustainability, ethical sourcing, and the impact of technology on the industry.

RICHARD: Richard, the popular South African entertainer, has been announced as the new host of the country's leading television show. Richard, who is known for his wit and charisma, has been a favorite of audiences for many years and is expected to bring a new dimension to the show.
Frantic bid to stop death train

JOHANNESBURG — A witness to one of South Africa's worst gold-mining disasters said a driver had tried unsuccessfully to take control of the runaway train before it plunged down a mine shaft and crushed, more than 100 miners.

Alphonse Motemekwane said he had encountered the driver running hysterically along a mining stope.

"He said: 'I think I have killed a lot of people,'" reported Mr. Motemekwane. "The driver was shaking and scared and was crying uncontrollably."

The accident happened on Wednesday night when the driverless locomotive crashed on top of a lift cage filled with workers, sending both plunging 500 metres and killing the miners.

Mine managers are mystified as the train is not supposed to move unless operated by a driver, and because it managed to avoid three safety barriers designed to avoid such a mishap.

The unnamed driver, who is under heavy sedation after being treated for shock, said he had just switched on the locomotive before starting his night duties, when it started moving on its own.

"The driver said he was using all available means to stop it, but it just kept moving. It crashed through the shaft's gate and went plunging down," said Mr. Motemekwane.

— Sapa-APP

See page 5
Disaster min gives up dea

Weary rescuers haul 72 bodies from blood

GRIM TASK: Rescue workers, wearing air filters because of the stench, remove more bodies from the Vaal Reefs number 2 mineshaft in Orkney. At least 104 miners died in the tragedy on Wednesday.

I missed the shift, says man who shot

ORKNEY — A miner believed killed in one of South Africa’s worst mining disasters turned up alive yesterday, saying he had missed the shift that plunged to its death two days earlier.

The man, whom managers refused to identify, reported to the mine office saying he missed the night shift at Vaal Reefs Gold Mine on Wednesday.

Lauren Wilson, a spokeswoman for mine owners Anglo American Corporation, said the why he did not.

The site struck by plunged 15 at noon.

Mr. Wi. were still
Miners stared in horror as rescuers, their boots splattered in blood, carried the mangled remains of workmates to the surface.

ORKNEY — Exhausted rescuers yesterday hauled from a bloody pit most of the bodies of 104 men killed in one of South Africa’s worst gold mine disasters.

Seventy-four bodies had been recovered from the pit where the men plunged to their deaths on Wednesday night after their double-tier lift was smashed down a shaft by a 12-ton runaway underground train, said Vaal Reefs Gold Mine officials.

The toll stands at 104.

Miners of all races, waiting to go on shift, stared in horror as rescuers, their boots splattered in blood, carried the mangled remains of friends and workmates to the surface of the mine, 150 km southwest of Johannesburg.

All the victims were blacks from South Africa, Lesotho, Mozambique and Botswana, said Vaal Reefs mine officials.

Rescuers Garth Ellis told reporters the accident was the worst he had seen. The shaft bottom where the lift came to rest after its death plunge was full of blood and water.

Mine officials said the remains recovered from the pit were so badly mangled that rescuers, working with angle-grinders to cut through a section of steel, were unsure exactly how many bodies had been recovered.

Grim-faced rescuers worked to clear human flesh and other body parts from the mine lift crushed to a third of its size by the train, which propelled the lift 650 metres to the bottom of the 2,300 m shaft.

President Mandela has declared a national day of mourning on May 17.

James Duncan, of mine managers Anglo American Corporation, said production at the mine, South Africa’s second largest in terms of production, would be affected seriously. The shaft would be closed for at least three weeks.

Mining Minister Pek Botha has called for an independent inquiry into the disaster.

The government wants quick answers as to how the train, whose driver leapt to safety, swept through safety barriers and other devices which should have halted its progress. Officials said that steel safety blocks, which should have prevented it plunging down the shaft, were missing — Sapa-AP.

MUCH-NEEDED REST: A rescue worker takes a break after a harrowing night.

Warm voice but cold comfort for victims’ families

Weekend Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — The warm voice on the telephone is a comfort to those anxious to hear about the fate of a loved one who they fear could be among the victims of the Vaal Reefs mine disaster.

"I take this very personally, having worked at the mine for 21 years," said Mrs Margaret Heylen, who has fielded many of the more than 1,000 calls to the Vaal Reefs hotline.

"I can empathise as a mother and wife, with the people who are phoning here.

Since the hotline was established she has been sitting in her office with a list of names of possible victims of the tragedy and a telephone.

"My first concern when someone's phone is to make sure it is the right person, by checking spelling and all the person's particulars, before telling them that their loved one is on the list.

Mrs Heylen, who has eight years' experience as a Lifeline counsellor and works in the public relations department of the mine, volunteered to man the 24-hour hotline.

"I break the news as gently as possible and tell them that if in fact their husband or brother was in the accident, that someone will contact and visit them.

The hotline number is (018) 4782574.
A son who will never
walk the hills of home

Union claims mine managers stripped on safety checks

The level 7 horror

Like that?

How can

So many

Like that?
Body bag number 102 ends grisly rescue operation

By PETER DE JONNO
and JACOB DILAMINI

VAAL REEF Mine officials and proto teams were confident yesterday that they had retrieved all the remains of the disaster victims.

Body bag number 102 was brought to the surface at 130pm yesterday as emergency workers continued to clear the wreckage of the compressed lift cage from a pool of blood and mud at the bottom of the shaft.

Deputy President F W de Klerk visited the mine yesterday and President Nelson Mandela and ANC general secretary Cyril Rhamnosa, a former leader of the NUM, will visit this week.

A mass memorial service for the victims will be held at Vaal Reefs, near Orkney, in the Western Transvaal, on Wednesday, coinciding with a national day of mourning called by Mr Mandela.

Mr de Klerk said the cabinet would expedite the appointment of an inquiry into the "great tragedy" when it met on Wednesday.

Many of the dead will have to be identified by fingerprints. Their bodies were grossly mutilated when their 7m lift was squashed to less than 2m after it plummeted 300m to the bottom of the shaft.

The cage was hit by a 12-ton locomotive and carriage which drove into the shaft on level 58 of No 2 shaft seconds after the lift had passed downwards.

Mine officials have admitted that safety devices to prevent rolling stock falling into the shaft were not in place.

Anglo American and the NUM have established a disaster fund to help the families of the victims.

The account details are: First National Bank, Russel Street South branch, (branch code 250605) account number 3000072220.

© The level 2 horror: Page 9
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Family members arrive at Vaal Reefs

FAMILY members of the 104 mine workers killed at Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft near Orkney began arriving at the mine yesterday where they received counseling from an employee assistance programme.

Representatives of the mine were still attempting to notify the families of mine workers who had been identified. Anglo American could not confirm how many bodies had been identified by late yesterday.

The majority of workers killed came from Lesotho, the Northwest, Eastern Cape (former Transkei), Botswana, Mozambique and Swaziland.

Another mine worker was killed in a rockfall at Anglo's President Steyn mine No 4 shaft on Friday.

Sources said yesterday that acting government mining engineer Dick Bakker would table a proposal today for the establishment of a judicial inquest and inquiry with an independent chairman and two assessors, which should be established by Wednesday.

The National Union of Mineworkers called on workers countrywide to observe a minute of silence at midday on Wednesday and to participate in lunchtime demonstrations near mines in Vaal Reefs, Welkom, Rustenburg, Randfontein, Highveld, Northern Cape, North Eastern Transvaal, Northern Natal and Western Cape.

On Friday, the union and Anglo agreed to the establishment of a joint disaster fund controlled by six trustees, three representatives from each party and an independent chairman.

According to Anglo, families of the deceased would have access to three sources of compensation.

These were Rand Mutual Insurance, the Mineworkers Assurance and Benefits Scheme and the Mineworkers Provident Fund. Taking into account the various benefits provided, widows would be paid out R4 750 in funeral benefits, close to R60 000 in lump sum payments (based on an average salary of R1 200 per month) and a monthly pension of approximately R420 a month for the widow and a lesser amount for children.
Mandela to Visit Mine

Locomotive driver, under guard, for own safety; answers first questions
Mine deaths must stop

The recent mine tragedy highlights the urgent need for a new health and safety act as outlined by the Leon Commission of Inquiry, reports Isaac Moledi:

Management’s low rate of detection of occupational diseases is another big health problem in the mining industry, the commission says.

The commission recommends that efforts be made to identify cases of occupational disease among former mine workers, so they can be properly compensated.

It also advises that workers be given basic adult education training by independent experts.

Another recommendation is the formation of a tripartite structure, which will investigate ways of improving workers’ lives and look at the whole question of housing and accommodation for workers and their families.

Mines currently rely heavily on migrant labour and thereby avoid providing proper housing for its workers.

A National Union of Mineworkers Occupational Health and Safety spokesman says “The new Act should be an enabling Act, and be as brief as possible. It should deal with the duties of the main participants in the industry and their respective fields of responsibility.”

The NUM says the commission should identify current regulations requiring immediate attention for amendment or repeal.

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The Vaal Reefs gold mine disaster, in which at least 102 people died last week, highlights the urgent need for the implementation of the recommendations of a recent inquiry into health and safety in the mines.

Disaster struck when a runaway locomotive and carriages plunged down a shaft and crushed a lift carrying workers on Wednesday.

At least 726 people died in South African mines in 1992 alone, making the country second only to Turkey for mine fatalities.

The Leon Commission of Inquiry, whose recommendations are currently being finalised, has criticised the present safety management system on the mines.

In its report, the commission says the safety management systems on the mines have become discredited in the eyes of workers and the public, because of the many disasters that have occurred at mines with high star ratings.

The commission says rock bursts and falls, underground explosions, track and tramming hazards, dust, noise, heat, and radiation are some of the dangers needing immediate attention.

It recommends that tripartite technical committees be established to investigate and monitor these hazards.

The commission calls for the drafting of a new health and safety act by representatives of the state, industry and the unions, as a matter of urgency.

The act should then be submitted to the tripartite Mine Regulations Advisory Council for debate and approval.

The commission says the codes of practice should form part of the legislative framework, as a supplement to the regulations.

Codes of practice are defined as codes specified by the manager of the mine as his chosen way of dealing with hazards and mitigating or reducing risks.

Guidelines for codes of practice should be published and made available to all concerned.

On the basis that upholding workers’ rights lays the foundation of good industrial relations, the commission recommends that the right to representation and participation and the right to refuse to do dangerous work should form basic components of health and safety codes.

Right to information

The commission also recommends that workers should have the right to information, education and training on health and safety matters relevant to their workplaces.

It also finds that inquiries into mine accidents are biased in management’s favour.

The commission recommends that the new Act should ensure that all parties involved are given information about any inspections carried out during an inquiry.
The thing that is so sad is that the relatives are not here. You would think these men had no families. It’s not right,” he said, brushing himself with the petrol pump to hide eyes that were filling with tears.

Vaal Reefs spokesman Mr Dick Fisher said the mine had sent representatives to inform the families of the dead. He could not say if the bodies would be sent to their families, because the mine was still struggling with putting together pieces that belonged together. The miners believed the mine would bury the dead on its property.

“They buried 30 miners behind one of the dumps in 1979,” said Mr Themba Majoze, a locomotive driver. “They may also bury these bodies on their property. A miner’s life is very cheap,” he said. The dead were all black.
Vaal Reefs probe starts tomorrow

By Abdul Milazi
Labour Reporter

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Affairs will tomorrow conduct the first on-site inspection at Vaal Reefs gold mine, scene of last week’s horror disaster in which 104 people died.

The workers were crushed to death last Wednesday when a locomotive smashed into their lift, sending it plummeting to the bottom of the shaft at 120kmh.

The National Union of Mineworkers has called for a national day of mourning on Wednesday, which will coincide with the mine’s memorial service.

Acting Government mining engineer Mr Dick Bakker, who will conduct tomorrow’s inspection, said he would be accompanied by experts to gather evidence and look into other technical matters. He said after the inspection, a judge would be appointed to head a commission of inquiry into the accident.

Spokesman for the Energy and Mineral Affairs Ministry Mr Roland Darrol said yesterday the Cabinet would meet on Wednesday to decide on the type of inquiry to be conducted.

He said the ministry was determined to ensure the inquiry was as thorough as possible and mechanisms to prevent a recurrence were put in place.

Meanwhile, mine officials were yesterday still busy trying to identify the victims, using fingerprinting.

Ms Lauren Wilson, spokeswoman for mine owners Anglo American Corporation, said a memorial service would be held at the mine’s Oppenheimer Stadium but details would be finalised at a special meeting between the NUM and management tomorrow.

She said families of the victims in the country, Lesotho, Mozambique and Botswana have already been notified and were expected at the memorial service.

However, Wilson said the names of the victims would not be released until the identification process had been completed and all families were notified.

Although the union and management yesterday still did not know how the funeral would be conducted, they agreed that it was impossible to bury the victims separately as they were so mangled.
Gruelling job at Vaal Reefs

By Ruth Bhengu.

There were no weeping families and friends waiting anxiously as the mangled bodies were brought out of Vaal Reefs' No 3 Shaft.

Only a handful of miners, the rescue team, journalists and mine publicists stood around keeping a tally of the bodies. It was a grim job.

This was Saturday morning and hopefully the day when the rescue operation would be completed.

At least 100 miners on the night shift had been crushed to death when a locomotive hurtled on to their triple-deck lift cage on level 56 of No 2 Shaft.

At about 7.45 am on Saturday morning four bodies had been brought to the surface by the underground rescuers.

A spokesman for the mine owners Anglo American, Mr James Duncan, had told reporters the rescue team was hoping to finish the job on Saturday.

Plastic bags

Already 92 bodies had been recovered, put into plastic bags, numbered and sent to the morgue. There were 12 more to be found.

It had been a gruelling job with rescue teams working day and night to pull bodies from the mangled wreckage of the lift cage lying 2,105 metres below the surface.

By Friday morning 47 bodies had been recovered. The mine management reported that the "easy" part was done.

The bodies in the top half of the cage had been lifted. Now the challenge facing rescuers was how to pry loose the crushed bodies caught in the badly squashed lower part of the cage.

Throughout the night the team of rescuers toiled in extreme heat, using angle grinders and blow torches to cut bodies free from the mangle of steel that had been the cage.

Collapsed

The cage had collapsed when a 12-ton locomotive had sped through an open barrier and landed on the cage carrying the miners.

Shortly after 10 am four more bodies were brought to the surface. An hour later another two

At 12.15 the last two bodies were taken to the morgue at Westveld Hospital in Orkney.

Meanwhile, Deputy President FW de Klerk, who was to address a conference in Klerksdorp, paid a brief visit to No 2 Shaft.

He explained that of the 104 people who were originally on the missing list, four were later located. They had not been part of the night shift.

Mangled

"It is difficult to ascertain exactly the number of bodies recovered because most were mangled," he said.

"So we may have more than one body in a bag," he said.

"But we have 100 bodies. At the moment there is a representative of the Department of Mineral Affairs and a member of the National Union of Mine Workers who have come to satisfy themselves that all bodies have been recovered," he said.

Fisher said the Department of Mineral Affairs would examine the wreckage to piece together information for the commission of inquiry to be held this week.
on mine safety, health

ILO meeting will focus

BUSINESS DAY, Monday, May 19, 1999

(212) 639-6600

On mine safety, health

ILO meeting will focus

BUSINESS DAY, Monday, May 19, 1999

(212) 639-6600
Mandela appoints commission to investigate Vaal Reefs disaster

ORKNEY — President Nelson Mandela appointed an official commission of inquiry yesterday to investigate the Vaal Reefs mining disaster.

Sapa reports he told a crowd of about 8 000 mine workers at the No 2 shaft — the scene of the accident which killed 104 miners — that this decision followed consultation with mining officials.

"I am tempted to feel that there is something drastically wrong (at the No 2 shaft) but I will suspend judgment until the commission has made its findings."

Referring to the Leon commission probe of mine safety, Mandela said safety regulations needed to be considered carefully within every industrial sector.

"The (commission's) report must be properly processed — it must be considered from the point of view of workers as a whole in every industry."

He said he would personally donate R10 000 to a national disaster fund for the families of the victims, while the ANC would donate about R100 000. The Vaal Reefs disaster fund account has been opened at the First National Bank's Nassik Street branch in Johannesburg.

Mine officials and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said a memorial service would begin at 2pm tomorrow at the Oppenheimer stadium near Orkney. Anglo spokesman James Duncan said the human tragedy overshadowed any consideration about potential loss of production. However, the No 2 shaft, which would not be operational for about two weeks, needed urgent attention to avoid rapid deterioration of the shaft's inner structure. At a meeting of mine workers attended by Mandela, Anglo gold and uranium division chairman Clem Suter said the company would do all it could to assist families of those who died.

"I can only say from the bottom of my heart how sorry I am. Something terrible must have happened in terms of all the safety precautions."

Reene Gravitzky reports that NUM health and safety co-ordinator Fleur Plummer said an initial estimate of the compensation cost to insurers was about R6.5m for 93 workers. The remaining 11 were contract workers and would receive less compensation because they were covered by fewer benefits.

Dundie said the government mining engineer had advised Anglo not to make further comments on the accident as an official investigation was in progress.

NUM general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe said the union had not yet been advised by the government mining engineer of this development.

The official in-loci inspection of the accident site organised by the government takes place today and will include management, unions and Mineral and Energy Affairs Department representatives.
Letter

Renee Gratzky

VAAL: Reets disaster a challenge to all parties

In the communication, the Army and the Government are both accused of not taking the necessary steps to improve the situation.

The Army is accused of not providing adequate support to the Government and of not ensuring that the necessary steps are taken to address the disaster.

The Government is accused of not taking the necessary steps to address the disaster and of not providing adequate support to the Army.

The letter calls for a joint effort by all parties to address the disaster and calls for the necessary steps to be taken to prevent similar disasters from occurring in the future.

The letter also calls for a review of the Army and Government's response to the disaster and for the necessary steps to be taken to improve the response to such events in the future.
Cost efficiency 'cuts mine lives'

Michael Umphert

METHODS used by the SA mining industry to improve cost efficiency were in some cases employed at the cost of shorter mine lives and the depletion of ores that could have supported selective mining, according to a report by AME Mineral Economics.

The AME said that in 1994, 196 tons or 15% of the world's total mine production was produced at a cash cost above the average gold price of $362. Most of this uneconomic production had come from SA mines.

Last year, only 10 tons out of an 11% identified world mine production of 1 billion tons was produced at a cash cost above the average gold price of $334.

The AME said improved cost efficiency had been achieved by raising head grades to improve yields, by labour rationalisation, increased mechanisation or by reducing ore throughput by selective mining and tight grade controls.

It said a number of SA mines were now marginal operations, but with a continuation of current gold prices and the further depreciation of the rand they should survive for a few more years. These included Askham, Loane and Blyvoor.

Some had closed, or would close their mining operations, and continued as dump retreatment operations.

EXECUTIVE SUITE
South African industry will soon have to comply with internationally-accepted health and safety conventions, Johan Olivier, a Johannesburg labour law expert, said yesterday.

Addressing a seminar on Occupational Health and Safety in Midrand, Olivier said the Labour Department and National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) were in the process of making recommendations on labour legislation which would comply with the new Bill of Rights.

Various international conventions on the protection of specific risks, such as toxic substances and agents, machinery, maximum weight, air pollution, noise and vibration and the handling of radioactive waste would have to be taken into consideration, he said.

Carl Mischke, senior lecturer at Unisa's Department of Mercantile Law, pointed out that the responsibility for safety in the workplace should not be the prerogative of the state only.

While legislation could play a significant role in accommodating danger in the workplace, it was only employees and their supervisors who could, through their actions, try to balance out work and peril.

The Leon Commission of Inquiry into health and safety in the mines has strongly criticised the present safety management system on the mines.

The Commission has also called for the drafting of a new health and safety act by representatives of the state, industry and the unions, as a matter of urgency.
At the scene... President Mandela visits No 2 mine at Vlakfontein in October where he met with the miners who were killed in the mine disaster. The President laid a wreath and placed flowers at the site.

Miners tomorrow
Country to mourn

ACCIDENT called a national disaster

NEWS
President Nixon, after a speech in his home state of California, meets with heads of
government agencies who were in the White House for a major decision in the
imminent economic crisis. The President's aides are seen discussing the situation
in the Oval Office. The crisis is believed to be caused by the oil crisis, which has
resulted in a severe shortage of fuel for transportation. The President is
expected to announce a plan to control the situation within the next few days.

-- By David Marvin

President Nixon's visit to the White House, 1973.
Mandela: Allow workers time off for mourning

□ 'This would help to alter views held by blacks'

The Argus Correspondent
ORKNEY — President Mandela has called on employers to allow workers to attend rallies and church services tomorrow to mourn the 104 miners killed at Vaal Reefs.

This would help to alter the perception held by black workers that whites did not care about the lives of black workers, he said to loud applause from workers after visiting number two shaft yesterday, where the accident took place last Wednesday.

'This perception is not going to be removed by word of mouth, but by what the country as a whole — and the white minority in particular — do on occasions like this,' Mr Mandela said.

The perception could be changed by employers allowing workers to attend the church services and rallies without restrictions, and by contributing substantially to the trust fund that had been established to help the victims' families.

A Labour Ministry spokesman said the Day of Mourning tomorrow was not a public holiday. It was up to employers to allow workers time off to attend rallies or church ceremonies.

More than 5 000 workers packed a soccer stadium at the mine to listen to Mr Mandela, who visited the mine together with Labour Minister Tito Mboweni and other members of the government.

Mr Mandela appealed to mine management to address the question of worker safety in conjunction with workers in a forum where both parties were regarded as equal.

Mr Suter said such structures, in line with Mr Justice Ramon Leon's proposals on mine safety, had been set up at all but two of Anglo's mines.

Mr Mandela said he regarded the accident as a national disaster, since workers — and mine workers in particular — played a critical role in producing the wealth that would make the country grow.

He was appointing a commission of inquiry to find out what had caused the accident.

He said that while he wanted to suspend judgment until the report of the commission was received, he was 'tempted to feel there was something drastically wrong'.

During his visit to the mine Mr Mandela was accompanied by senior government officials — including Mr Mboweni, Constitutional Assembly head Cyril Ramaphosa, National Union of Mineworkers head James Motlatsi and ANC deputy secretary-general Cheryl Carolus.

For those wishing to donate to the disaster fund, the account details are First National Bank, Russian Street South branch, branch code 250605, account number 3000072230.

PRESIDENT'S VISIT: President Mandela yesterday visited the Vaal Reefs Number two shaft, where 104 miners died last week.
Mandela says he’ll order mine disaster inquiry

ORKNEY: President Nelson Mandela said yesterday he would appoint a commission of inquiry into last week’s mining disaster, in which 104 people were killed.

"The commission will go into it and present their report as soon as possible," he told a mass meeting of about 5,000 miners in a soccer stadium at Vos Reefs mine near here.

Media reports had "tempted" him to think something was "drastically wrong," but he wanted to suspend judgment until the commission reported its findings.

He said there was a perception among black South Africans that whites did not care about black lives.

That he did not share it did not alter the perception.

"I’d like all employers to help us remove that perception," he said, appealing to them to show their concern by allowing workers to attend church services and rallies tomorrow, the national day of mourning for the miners who died in the accident.

Mr Mandela said the ANC was donating R100,000 to a trust fund set up for the families of the workers and he personally was donating R10,000.

Earlier he met rescuers, emergency services and trade union officials at the mine.

Anglo American spokesman Mr James Duncan was unable to say how many of the families had been advised of the tragedy.

Mr Mandela last night called on South Africa’s business community to help address some of the most urgent needs of communities, such as primary health care, education, welfare, small business and sport development.

Speaking to groups of top businessmen and politicians at the opening of the SAB Centenary Centre in Newtown, Johannesburg, Mr Mandela said the South African business community had the resources to contribute more directly to the realization of the vision of freedom, equality and prosperity that all South Africans shared — Sapa-Reuters
Miners to mourn 104 colleagues

Many miners across the country have shut down for today's memorial services for the 104 miners who died in what President Mandela has called a national disaster at Vaal Reefs gold mine's No 2 shaft.

Workers at Anglo American and Gencor gold mines have been given the day off on full pay to observe the tragedy.

Relatives of the dead miners arrived at the mine last night to attend the service. About 350 people, who were ferried in by bus, are being housed at a hostel.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki visited the accident site yesterday and was briefed by Vaal Reefs regional general manager Dick Fisher and Shaft 2 sectional manager Piet Becker.

Mbeki inspected the winding house next to the shaft and was then shown a video reconstructing the accident.

Mbeki said discussions on members of a commission of inquiry would be completed today. The commission would consist of at least a judge and two assistants, he said.

Patrick Bulger reports that Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha will ask the Cabinet today to set up a judicial commission of inquiry into the Vaal Reefs disaster.

"The Government is determined to see to it that the puzzling questions surrounding this disaster are fully investigated," he said. - Staff Reporters
THOUSANDS of people will attend church services and hold rallies countrywide today to mourn the 104 miners who were crushed to death at Vaal Reeks gold mine near Orkney last week.

During a visit to the mine yesterday, Ml Gwede Mantashe, assistant general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers and the disaster could have been avoided if the recommendations of the Leon report on mine safety had been implemented earlier.

He said there should be no further delay in upgrading mine safety.

Asked if the earlier implementation of the Leon report proposals might have saved the lives of the 104 miners who died in the accident, he said “Yes, because they (the recommendations) make safety procedures a participative issue, not a management issue.”

— Sowetan Reporter and Sapa
Government giving R5-m to mine disaster fund

Political Staff

PRESIDENT Mandela today announced a R5 million government donation to the Vaal Reefs mining disaster fund.

The president was speaking at a media briefing at his Tuynhuys offices during a break in the regular fortnightly cabinet meeting at which the disaster — which claimed 104 lives last week — was discussed.

Mr Mandela said the Vaal Reefs accident had been a "unique disaster" which had touched the whole country.

The R5 million would be made available to the dead miners' next-of-kin and would be jointly administered by the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, the Anglo American Corporation and the National Union of Mineworkers.

He said the ANC was giving R100,000 and he challenged Anglo to match the government's donation and other political parties to match the ANC's donation.

Mr Mandela appealed to individuals and companies to make "generous" contributions to the fund.

Deputy President F W de Klerk told the briefing a Supreme Court judge, assisted by two expert assessors, would establish a commission of inquiry to advise government on safety measures to prevent such accidents happening in the future.

The judge would also oversee the statutory investigation and the inquests, Mr De Klerk said.
Justice R Leon appointed to head mining disaster commission of inquiry

Subdued pupils, relatives and friends could yesterday not hold their tears during the emotionally charged funeral service of six young boys who were killed when a fire broke out in their bedroom at the Christian Life Haven, Bertram, Johannesburg, last week.

PIC: MBUZENI ZULU

70 000 GRIEVE FOR DEAD MINERS

Government gives R5 million to relief fund

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AMES MOTALATI

expressing condolences to relatives and committting themselves to respect for human life

James Motalatli

In Cape Town, as thousands of people throughout the country mourned the victims of the disaster, President Nelson Mandela announced that the Government would contribute R5 million to the President’s Disaster Fund. Addressing a Press conference in Cape Town, Mandela urged the mine’s owners, Anglo American Corporation, to match the Government’s contribution and appealed to the public to donate generously to the fund.

Anglo has said it will contribute R2.5 million to the fund as will Vaal Reefs.

Pik Botha

Mandela has personally contributed R10 000 to the fund and the African National Congress R100 000.

A committee comprising representatives of the Departments of Mineral and Energy Affairs, and Labour, the National Union of Mineworkers, and Anglo would be appointed to administrate the allocation of funds to next of kin.

Anglo American chairman Mr Julian Ogilvie Thompson told mourners at Orkney that although the company could not return life to the victims, it could learn lessons from the accident.

That is why an investigation which reveals every fact and every feature of the accident is so important. The management of Vaal Reefs and all associated with it in the Anglo group have entirely committed themselves to such an investigation.

"We cannot return life to the now lifeless but we can provide support to families and dependents of those who have died.

Speaking at the Orkney memorial service, Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs Mr Pik Botha said Mr Justice R Leon would preside over a joint inquiry into the Vaal Reefs mining disaster.

He said Justice Leon would be assisted by two assessors — an officer from his department and an independent assessor with extra training in electronics. "I wish to pay tribute to the rescue workers who had the impossible task of removing the remains of the victims from the crushed steel cage.

"They did so with dedication and devotion under dangerous conditions. I trust that we in South Africa will put emphasis on the spiritual and intellectual needs of our mine workers and assist them to a greater extent to enrich their lives with education, training and cultural pursuits," Botha said.

Botha said a shrine should be built at the bottom of the mine shaft where the miners died.

A large delegation of Lesotho dignitaries attended the service. Many of the disaster victims were citizens of Lesotho. Among the Lesotho delegation was Deputy Prime Minister Professor Pakalitha Moshoeu.

National Union of Mineworkers president, Mr James Mokola, and the mourners that few mining tragedies had been more devastating than the Vaal Reefs accident.

"This is not just a sad occasion, it is a tragedy. One hundred and four lives were lost in a single tragedy that lasted only a matter of seconds," Motalatli said.

Memorial services were held throughout the country — Sapa
Leon appointed as chairman of inquiry into Vail Reefs disaster
Mines come under fire

BY THABO LESEHLO

South Africa's mining houses have been harshly criticised for the high rate of mine accidents in which almost 600 workers die each year.

MEC for economic affairs John Molokwane said at a function in Johannesburg to mark the 25th anniversary of the formation of Nafoce's Gauteng region, that profits generated by the mines did not "justify the death of even one of our people".

He said mining houses had a grave responsibility to ensure that the industry guaranteed the lives of everybody who works for them.

He said the high death toll on SA's mines would not occur in countries such as Britain and Australia without resulting in a public outrage.
Nation mourns miners

Orkney — Loud grief from anguished relatives was heard from among the 70 000 people who gathered in a stadium near the Vaal Reefs mine yesterday when the country mourned 104 miners killed in last week’s disaster near Orkney.

The horror of the underground accident was also remembered at memorial services held in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, where speakers called for improved safety measures on mines.

At the moving service in the stadium near the gold mine, church, political, union and business officials paid tribute to those who had died.

Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu said God had not abandoned the mourners or the dead. But he added that prosperity for the country was being bought at a high price.

As the mining community mourned in Orkney, President Mandela announced in Cape Town that a R5-million donation to the disaster fund from the Government increased the fund to more than R11-million in pledges, with R2.5-million each from the mine owner, Anglo American Corporation, and personal pledges of R10 000 from the president and Anglo’s chairman.

In Parliament flags fluttered at half-mast as they had in Orkney while MPs messages expressed the national grief.

The mourners who packed Orkney’s Ernest Oppenheimer Stadium were told by Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha that a commission of inquiry had been established to investigate the incident.

Botha announced that Mr Justice Ramon Leon, who headed the recent commission of inquiry into mine safety, would head the probe.

The judge would be assisted by an engineer from Botha’s department and an independent expert appointed by the department in collaboration with the National Union of Mineworkers.

For those wishing to donate to the disaster fund, the account details are First National Bank, Russel Street, branch code 230635, account number 9009722290.
ATTENTIVE: Trade and Industry Minister Trevor Manuel and deputy presidents Thabo Mbeki and F W de Klerk, in front, with Public Works Minister Jeff Radebe and Defence Minister Joe Modise, behind, listen attentively during a memorial service at St George’s Cathedral for the victims of the Orkney mine disaster.

Mourners told of 63 000 miners’ deaths

Staff Reporter

MORE than 63 000 miners have died and more than a million have been seriously injured in accidents since the start of the century, mourners were told at a St George’s Cathedral memorial service for victims of the Orkney mine disaster.

“These mines have voracious appetites. They devour our workers. The carnage must end. Health and safety measures should be set up with the co-operation of workers,” Philip Dexter, the regional secretary of the SACP, said.

Hundreds of people, including the two deputy presidents, Thabo Mbeki and F W de Klerk, attended the service yesterday to mourn the deaths of the 104 mineworkers killed a week ago when a runaway underground train fell down Number 2 shaft at the Vaal Reefs gold mine.

Delivering a message on behalf of the National Union of Mineworkers, Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism Trevor Manuel said new legislation to ensure the safety of mineworkers should be drafted immediately and passed by parliament this year.

He said Vaal Reef Mines had made a R863 million profit last year, but only paid out a total of R6 million compensation to the families of the Orkney mine disaster.

“There lives are cheap,” he said.

- There were tears and clenched fists at the Oppenhuizen Stadium near Orkney, where about 70 000 people gathered to pay their respects to the victims of the disaster.

Political and business leaders attending the service unanimously called for wide-ranging reforms, including the speedy implementation of the Leon Commission’s recommendations for improved safety on mines.

Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs Pik Botha announced details of a joint inquiry into the mine accident at Vaal Reefs and pledged government support for proposed worker participation in mine safety procedures.

He said the inquiry would be presided over by Judge R Leon together with two assessors—a government officer and an independent assessor.
**Mine victims' lives cheap**:  
STAFF REPORTER

A host of mineworkers, including members of the NUM, attended a memorial service at St George's Cathedral in Johannesburg yesterday for the 104 miners who died when a fire at the Vaal Reefs gold mine last week.  

The families of the mineworkers said the disaster opened a new chapter in the title's history, which was set to take place in the near future.  

The NUM, which had previously called for the mine to be closed, said it was entitled to speak to the day's events, and the families of the miners had been invited to give evidence to the parliamentary committee.  

"The NUM's death toll of 104 is a testament to the fact that the miners' lives are cheap," said a NUM official.  

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**Mine memorial crowd jeers Pik**:  
STAFF REPORTER

The Memorial Service to the 104 miners who died at the Vaal Reefs gold mine yesterday was marred by the jeers of a crowd.  

The service was held at St George's Cathedral in Johannesburg, and was attended by a host of dignitaries, including the Prime Minister, the President, and other officials.  

However, during the service, a crowd of about 500 people disturbed the proceedings by jeering and shouting.  

The crowd, which included some of the miners' families, disrupted the service and caused a number of incidents, including a scuffle with a police officer.  

The police had to intervene to restore order, but the service was marred by the disruptive behavior of the crowd.  

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Anglo American gold mines have been at the centre of a national crisis in recent months, following a series of accidents and deaths at the mines.  

The company's management has been criticized for its handling of the crisis, and the families of the miners have called for a new approach to safety.  

The company has promised to review its safety policies and procedures, and has stated that it will take steps to ensure that such incidents do not happen again.
Apartheid's mines need overhaul

By PAUL BENJAMIN

FOUR events this year should leave SA in no doubt as to the character of the mining industry which has inherited from apartheid.

Two of these have been tragedies at Vaal Reefs gold mine — the accident of May 10 and the hooligan fighting in March that left 11 miners dead. The other two are judicial pronouncements severely critical of the way in which the industry has discharged its duties to ensure the health and safety of its employees and neighbouring communities. These are: the Leon commission of inquiry and Judge Kotze’s inquiry into the Merrickspruit disaster.

Surprisingly, no commentator has linked the two Vaal Reefs disasters. Hostels are the true metaphor of the inequality produced by our mines. They are the institutions that allowed urban SA to develop at the expense of rural areas, homelands and surrounding countries. This argument, made clearly, was accepted by the Leon commission.

The migrant labour system is also the root cause of the neglect of health and safety. It has promoted an attitude that is careless to the consequences of industrial injury, disease and death. Careless because our legal system has allowed life to become cheap — neither encouraging safety in the workplace nor deterring conduct that endangers life and health. So careless that the industry has no idea of how much disease it has exported to the homelands and other labour reserves.

The pattern of labour migration has changed. Miners no longer work on the mines for a short period and return to the rural economy. They die at Vaal Reefs, are career miners with plans to spend a full working life in SA's mines. Yet, as the Leon commission noted, the industry has not used this opportunity to improve, strengthen and invest in miners' health and safety training. They remain replaceable migrants inadequately trained to combat the risks they face every day.

The Leon commission (which included the Chamber of Mines former research adviser) rejected two of the central tenets of the mining industry's approach to health and safety.

The first was that the miners' high accident rate was attributable to human and technical factors beyond the industry's control. This state of mind has allowed the industry to conceal from itself the true cause of its poor accident record — the lack of proper management of safety. The second was that the industry should be trusted to regulate itself. As the commission pointed out, self-regulation produced the Kuroms disaster and the emergence of work-related lung diseases among miners and ex-miners. Self-regulation is not the result of the puny funding allocated by government to the enforcement of health and safety standards.

Even more damaging is the finding by Kotze that mine management has systematically covered up the cause of the Merrickspruit disaster. The significance of this finding goes beyond establishing the deceit of one management team — it reflects an arrogant industry unwilling to learn from its mistakes. The result is an industry that produces a disaster of major proportions (30 or more deaths) at least once every two years.

Government's dignified response has replaced the focus on the enormity of tragedy; not, as in previous disasters, on the defence (by government and employers) of the industry's safety standards. But the test is still to come. Implementing the Leon commission recommendations will require the same health and safety inspectorate budget to be increased more than threefold. Government will have to override bureaucratic dictates (particularly in the area of remuneration) if it is to create effective systems of enforcement and prosecution. Government and President Nelson Mandela have personally contributed to a trust fund for miners' families. The test will come when trade unions call for an overhaul of our inadequate workers' compensation system.

Anglo American gold division chairman Clem Sunter has been eloquent in his expressions of grief. The test will be whether his corporation implements the type of management systems recommended by the commission that make senior managers and directors personally responsible for health and safety performance. Will we see accident and disease figures in the annual reports of Vaal Reefs and its sister mines, as recommended? Will the corporation continue to resist improvements to the compensation system?

The unions will also be tested. Tripartism at industry level and worker participation, essential parts of the Leon proposals, will place unprecedented pressures on their limited resources. And there is a test for the public and the media. Can we maintain our interest in these issues beyond the disasters and the headlines and apply pressure to ensure something is done?

Last year Vaal Reefs had an operating profit of R190m. In the same period government spent R19m on enforcing health and safety standards in the entire mining industry. The NUM estimates that the families will receive between R5m and R7m in worker's compensation. The enormity of these disparities tells a tale of privilege and neglect, but also holds the promise for real change.

Benjamin is a labour lawyer and NUM adviser on mine safety.
Panama Canal workers in danger of losing job

The 10,000 workers were crowded into a recessed place for a mass meeting, which was filled to capacity in time.

The delegation was asked to leave the room.

We understand the latter is an arbitrary measure.

The delegation was asked to leave the room.

The delegation was asked to leave the room.
gold price — floods of blood

The gold price has soared in recent weeks. The floods of blood that have swept through the South African mining sector in recent years have contributed to the gold price's rise. The floods have led to a significant increase in production costs, which has pushed the gold price higher. The floods have also caused significant damage to mines and infrastructure, leading to production disruptions and further cost increases. The floods have also highlighted the need for greater investment in safety and infrastructure in the mining sector. The gold price is expected to remain high in the near term, driven by increased production costs and ongoing disruptions caused by the floods.
The terrible cost of gold

President Nelson Mandela added to the discomfort of mine owners when he announced on Monday that he was giving R10,000 of his own money to the fund for the victims of the Vaal Reefs mine disaster. He was showing extraordinary generosity and a fine sense of public relations, and he was signalling that this government viewed such incidents in a way that no South African government has done before.

Mandela is honorary life president of the National Union of Mineworkers. ANC general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa made his name as general secretary of the union, his deputy in the union, Marcel Golding, is chairman of the parliamentary committee on mineral affairs, that union is a major force in Cosatu, an alliance partner with the ANC and the Communist Party. But the links are not just personal and historical, mineworkers are now voters — and a sizeable block of them. They are, for the first time, people who can claim their rights as citizens.

And Mandela was demonstrating his government's willingness to hear those claims.

The mining industry will never be the same again after last week's incident. It was going to have to change anyway with this week's publication of the hard-hitting Leon inquiry into mine safety. The facts alone are startling: every ton of gold costs roughly one life and 12 serious injuries. Since the turn of the century, the mines have claimed the lives of 69,000 miners and seriously injured a million more. The vast bulk of this damage happens not in high-profile accidents but in relatively small routine incidents that barely merit a media report.

Judge Ramon Leon's conclusion was unequivocal: "The status quo cannot continue." You can be certain, after this week's events, it won't.

Gone are the days when the mine owners will be able to get away with a few words of sympathy and a little cash for the funeral. Nor will it rest with their contribution of R2.5 million to the victims' fund. The way the mines work, the attitude to workers who risk their lives every day for very little money, the resources the mines put into safety — all this is going to have to change. Expect a revolution in the world's cruellest industry.

The industry knows this, which is why Vaal Reefs shares fell significantly within hours of the accident. It wasn't only because production would be affected. The market had spoken. And so had the president.

Floods of blood, PAGE 12 & 13
Welcome to the Mail & Guardian

We have changed our newspaper this week as part of a concerted drive to ensure we are a truly modern paper designed for the late 1990s. This is an era when you may get flashes of news more quickly from television, radio or the Internet — but we aim to give you information, depth, reading pleasure, stimulation and entertainment not available in other media.

The paper has simplified its name to the Mail & Guardian, but it keeps its basic mission: the provision of thought-provoking, high-quality, entertaining and independent journalism.

Other changes to look out for include:
- This double page of briefs, called Seven Days, providing a variety of interesting snippets of information;
- A new column, called Man/Woman Friday, a light-hearted look at people in the news (page 4);
- More news from our subcontinent, to add to the fullest world coverage of any South African newspaper (page 30);
- A fuller section of opinion and analysis, called Context (pages 32 to 34). This includes Cutting Edge, a feature dedicated to new ideas and trends around the world;
- A new look at arts and books section, called Reviews, with improved entertainment listings.

Some of our regular features have moved around. The new index opposite should help you find them.

We hope you enjoy the changes. We will be refining and improving them over the next few months, so suggestions are welcome. Write to The Editor, Box 32362, Braamfontein 2017, fax (011) 403-1026, or contact us via the Internet at newdesk@wmail.mis.net.org.

Anton Harber, editor
THE VAAL REEFS DISASTER

A time to mourn

After the appalling loss of 104 lives at Vaal Reefs’ No 2 shaft in the most distressing of circumstances, intense anger — however irrationally it may be focused — is a natural part of catharsis. It will in time give way to a more rational assessment and appreciation of the widespread sorrow and spontaneous gestures of material generosity being made by so many who join the bereaved in their grief and wish to express their solicitude.

This is a time to pause and mourn — and to support in their sorrow with unqualified sympathy those who have to bear the loss of loved ones.

The men died in terrible circumstances, the like of which is hard to imagine. To compare this with other disasters serves no purpose. It certainly wouldn’t diminish the loss nor explain the circumstances. And respect for those who undertake such dangerous work far underground suggests that we owe it to them to see to the material needs of their wives and dependants when disasters occur. It is worth noting that charity still has a place in most religions.

Whatever a commission may find, one thing seems perfectly clear — this accident had little, if anything, to do with the peculiar figuration and danger of mining endeavours in this country. It could have happened in many sectors of the heavy manufacturing industry. It was patently not deliberate. To assume that it is an extension of a long history of neglect and insensitivity would be at best premature and at worst to suggest political opportunism of the most callous kind.

A commission will establish whether the correct safety procedures were followed and, if there was negligence, who should bear the responsibility. Once that has happened, political and moral judgment (or retribution) will be appropriate and unavoidable. Until then, the bereaved deserve the dignity of unqualified lamentation.

FINANCIAL MAIL • MAY • 19 • 1985 • 23
Another miner dies at Vaal Reefs

Minister calls for urgent revision of safety

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — The news of two more mine deaths comes as families battle to decide on funeral arrangements for the mangled bodies of the 104 miners killed in the disaster at Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft last week.

The deaths, at Vaal Reefs and Hartbeesfontein yesterday, a week after a runaway locomotive plunged on to a lift cage full of nightshift miners, have prompted a call for “a speedy and thorough revision” of mine safety.

They came as families of the miners killed in the disaster were fighting to take their bodies home.

But many families want relatives buried near their homes.

A spokesman for the office of government mining engineer Les Kugel said a separate investigation was being carried out in terms of the Minerals Act.

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R70 000 donation to miners’ disaster fund

Sasol has donated R20 000 to the Vaal Reefs Disaster Fund to assist relatives of the victims. Chairman Mannus Daling said the company shared the nation's sense of shock and bereavement and its heart went out to the families of the victims of the tragedy.

And Syfrets will donate R50 000 to the Vaal Reefs Disaster Relief Trust set up by the National Union of Mineworkers, its chief executive, Christopher Beatty, announced.

**Charter Consolidated listing:** Charter Consolidated said it would issue and list 318,998 new shares on the London and Johannesburg stock exchanges on May 26, it said in a statement. The company said it would pay a cash dividend totalling £7 million.

**Portuguese trade mission:** A Portuguese trade mission led by Secretary of State Lous Palha will host a promotional tour aimed at sharing commercial opportunities with South African businessmen at the Sandton Sun Hotel on Monday and Tuesday.

**Namibia gas reserves:** Gas reserves in the Kudu offshore field 200km west of Luderitz on Namibia's coast have been confirmed as being at least 5 trillion cubic feet. Shell Exploration Namibia spokesman Ger Kegger said he said Namibia was on the verge of commercial exploitation of the reserves and the development is expected to exceed N$4 billion.

**Telkom wage agreement:** Telkom said the Post Office and Telecommunications Workers Association had signed a wage agreement for an 11.1 percent annual across-the-board wage increase, backdated to April 1. The minimum wage of R1 226 a month would be raised to R1 500, it said.
Mine eyewitness recounts instants of horror

By NEWTON KANHEMA

The only known eyewitness to the Vaal Reefs locomotive death plunge has described the horror accident for the first time.

Located this week, Lesotho citizen Alfonso Mohaila said that only moments before the tragedy which claimed the lives of 104 miners, he was chatting to the driver of the locomotive deep underground.

Shortly afterwards the locomotive and the man-cage it was pulling plunged more than half a kilometre down Shaft 2 on to a lift cagewith the doomed miners. The driver - identified to date only as Jack -

Shattered: Alfonso Mohaila is in hospital.

Speaking haltingly in his hostel, Mohaila - also a driver on the mine - described how the locomotive (known as a maka-lanyani by the miners) had suddenly swept past.

"And then Jack came running and screaming so loud, telling me the locomotive had fallen into the shaft.

"He ran back and forth screaming. He was running to the shaft opening where the locomotive had gone down. I thought he wanted to follow the makalanyani into the shaft."

When Mohaila asked his hysterical colleague what had happened, Jack replied that he had plugged in a cable attaching a battery to the locomotive.

Mohaila said: "I was just finishing my shift and I met Jack at level 56. I wanted a cage to take me to the surface. Then he just went round the other side of the station. Suddenly I heard some abnormal sound," said Mohaila.

The miner said the scale of the tragedy became evident to other miners who gathered on level 56 after the incident.

For more than an hour they stood around in complete silence waiting for a lift-cage to take them to another shaft and to the surface.

Jebu Maphala, a spokesman for Anglo American, said the mine owners were awaiting the findings of the commission of inquiry. "No one knows (yet) what happened," he said.
Two miners die in rock burst

Two miners died after a rock burst at Freegold's Western Holdings Number One shaft in Welkom early yesterday morning, Anglo American Corporation spokesman James Duncan said.

He said the rock burst 1100m below the surface followed a seismic event measuring 0.7 on the Richter scale.
Truth commission for the mining industry

What went wrong at Vos River? At least four safety mechanisms failed to prevent a runaway locomotive from derailling the main track. How could such a thing happen?

Employers and industry sources are quoted blaring "human error" and lack of training. These factors may well have contributed but for some to have had such appalling consequences points to a breakdown of safety regulations as as whole.

The recently released report of the Leon commission on health and safety in the mining industry comes to the same conclusion. The report presents a thorough account of the failure of employers and the state to protect the health and safety of mine workers. Since 1990, over 600 mine workers have died and more than a million have been injured underground. In 1990, 576 men died in accidents and 8322 were seriously injured. On average, 1.5 workers per thousand exposed to risk underground every year, and 26 per thousand are injured.

The commission "observed with dismay" the tendency of many senior mining officials to blame physical and human factors beyond the industry's control, and to claim that the systems in place are fine and the accidents are due to human error.

It quotes the last French medical inspector of factories, Thomas Legge "Unless and until the employer has been shown that every system is a good deal — the workmen can do no more to reduce to a minimum what is human error.

The commission found that management systems to ensure safety are completely inadequate. In addition, mining strategies and support systems that could reduce rock falls are not implemented widely enough, "must-forest vigilance is applied by management and the inspectors to ensure satisfactory ventilation in coal mines, and for little attention is paid to the trend of coal dust.

The commission concluded that, "management must engage the systems to minimise the opportunity for human error, and from all risks of the work place to act in accordance with sound procedures."

The occupational health record of the industry is anything, worse than the accident record. The commission noted a lack of adequate data to assess trends on occupational diseases such as tuberculosis, pneumococcal and r e s e n - l e r i n s .

About 5000 mine workers a year are certified as having acquired such occupational diseases, "but the figure is certainly higher."

The commission noted that the Chamber of Mines' submission on health was restricted to two and a half pages, and remarked that "argument by assertion is unlikely to prove very persuasive."

By contrast, the trade unions presented "a number of expert witnesses" based on scientific evidence.

The commission concluded that there was no evidence of a decade of occupational disease over the past 20 years, or that current legislation or enforcement agencies offered any prospect of control.

The commission report paints a daunting picture of the state regulation and data, the mineral and energy affairs department has failed despite to police regulations because its inspecrtors are desperate under-resourced.

Most shocking is the department's failure to launch serious investigations into accidents, since "there is a clear link between accident investigation and accident prevention."

It heard evidence of bias in favour of employers and white witnesses on the part of the inspectors, of their cavalier attitude, or of employers' control over evidence, and of the exclusion of the National Union of Mine workers from proceedings at hearings and inspections.

It is no wonder that a union official likened the commission to a "truth commission for the mining industry."

It was clear that the current system of health and safety regulations make mines fully complete to protect workers from death, injury and disease.

What does the commission recommend to remedy this?

Self-regulation

The Chamber of Mines argued for the commission to form a system of "self-regulation", in which the mine manager would retain the discretion to decide the details of health and safety in a manner best suited to the particular tasks. The union and the department opposed this. The commission itself concluded that self-regulation had "failed" and was "unacceptable", and cited many examples that the industry became aware 20 years ago of the dangers of using inflammable polyurethane underground.

Yet despite repeated tragedies, including the Karezene fire which killed 177 workers in 1966, it still is in use underground.

"This is a stark illustration of the danger of allowing even a well-regarded industry to get on with its own regulations," commented the commission report.

The commission recommended state regulation, via improved legislation and a strengthened inspectorate to police health and safety regulations, as well as play a more active role in improving health and safety, and to coordinate the industry's efforts with those of other national and international bodies.

It also recommended establishing a tripartite structure consisting of employers, labour and the state to govern research, advise the miners and monitor legislation and regulations.

This is a dramatic shift from the current system, in which the department and employers exclude the union from participating in health and safety governance.

In the words of the commission, the union advocates a departure from the current unilateral and hierarchical management control of health and safety, and recommends empowering workers with rights to training, information, to refuse dangerous work, and to participate.

The right to participate entails electric safety representatives as who can inspect the workplace, take part in drawing up codes and reviewing health and safety management. It is a matter of urgent that the government replace the current completely inadequate health and safety system with the new system recommended by the commission.

The commission "hopes" that management's attitudes are not a sign that it is a little cheaper in South Africa than elsewhere. "It is important to remain optimistic, as the current problems cannot be overcome without the support of the top leadership of the industry."

Perhaps now that the hundreds of thousands of workers who tell underground are citizens and voters, the industry will be compelled to pay attention to their health and safety. We owe it to the memory of the latest in terms of the current standards of state affairs — 104 dead miners at Vos River — to ensure that this happens.
Mine disaster fund already R10-m up

BY PRISCILLA SINGH

The Vaal Reefs Disaster Fund stands at well over R10-million, with people and organisations throughout SA opening their hearts — and purses — in a show of support for the families of the 104 mining disaster victims.

The fund is a joint effort of the Anglo American Corporation and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

The latest pledge of goodwill was made by the Taiwanese Embassy, which handed a cheque for R100,000 to the fund yesterday.

According to Lauren Wilson of Anglo American it is the intention of the parties that every cent donated be made available to the fund's beneficiaries.

The following pledges have been made thus far:
- Anglo American Corporation R2.5-million;
- Vaal Reefs R2.5-million;
- SA Government R5-million;
- President Mandela R10,000 (personal);
- Clem Sunter R10,000 (personal);
- De Beers Consolidated Mines R200,000;
- Marinus Daling (chairman of Sunlam) R20,000 (personal chairman's fund);
- ANC R100,000, SA public R883,993.67.

Donations can be paid into the fund's bank account, Vaal Reefs Disaster Fund, First National Bank, Russell Street South branch, account number 3000072230.
Mine disaster
dead unburied

By Abdul Milazi
Labour Reporter

The bodies of the 104 miners, who were crushed to death at the Vaal Reefs mine near Orkney two weeks ago, are still lying at West Vaal Hospital mortuary.

It is not yet known when or how the bodies will be buried because the families of the victims were yesterday still divided over management's proposal to arrange a mass funeral.

Meanwhile, the families and mine management were yesterday still locked in discussions to try and reach an agreement on the funeral arrangements.

Anglo American spokesman Mr. Lauren Wilson said while some families had agreed to a mass funeral, others were still insisting on taking the bodies of their kin to be buried in Lesotho.

Wilson said there was nothing the mine could do because the bodies belonged to the families and it was for them to decide how they were to be buried. Of the 104 people who died, more than 70 bodies have been identified, and a further 24 could be identified before the end of the week.

Even if the mine management and the families reach an agreement soon, the bodies could still remain at the mortuary because they have to be cleared with South African border officials. The Mineral Act also demands that post-mortems be conducted on all victims of mine accidents.

Meanwhile, President Nelson Mandela is still to officially proclaim a commission of inquiry into the disaster, which happened when a runaway locomotive plunging into a lift carrying the miners underground on May 10.

Mr. Justice R Leon, who has been appointed to head the Vaal Reefs Commission of Inquiry, said Mandela could proclaim the investigation as early as next week.

Leon said he was still waiting for preliminary reports before he could begin his work.

"I was told the Government was still busy with preliminary formalities and will report to the commission as soon as these have been completed."
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"I was told the Government was still busy with preliminary formalities and will report to the commission as soon as these have been completed."
R10m in mine disaster fund

Johannesburg: The Vaal Reefs Disaster Fund stands at well over R10 million, with people and organisations throughout South Africa opening their hearts — and purses — in support of families of the mine disaster victims.

The embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) yesterday handed over a cheque for R100 000 to the fund.
Gold mines' capital productivity drops

Michael Urquhart

The productivity of capital in the SA gold mining industry had declined substantially over the past 20 years, a Chamber of Mines analysis shows.

The chamber said in its latest newsletter that despite productivity drives and substantial increases in capital injections during that period, the industry’s capital stock was 2.5 times greater than in 1975 although it was now producing 138 tons a year less.

Increases in the level of fixed capital stock had averaged 5.5% a year over the period. The study, by chamber economist William Rootman, showed that over the same period real growth in the sector’s GDP averaged 0.5%. For most of the years covered, the capital productivity had been declining, with the trend showing signs of a correction after 1991.
Mining safety
laws to be drafted

Renee Grawitzky
(2) 6026 15 96

The mining regulations advisory committee would meet for the first time at the end of the month to begin drafting new health and safety legislation for the mining industry.

This development is in line with the Leon commission’s recommendation that the committee be established as a matter of urgency to “start immediately on the drafting of the Health and Safety in Mines Act”.

A task group mandated by a mining summit meeting and headed up by government mining engineer Dick Bakker was requested to draft the committee’s terms of reference. The task group included representatives of labour and business.

Meanwhile, the parliamentary standing committee on Mineral and Energy Affairs has received comments from interested parties on the Leon commission recommendations.

Public hearings will be held within two weeks for parties who wish to present additional comment.

Committee chairman Marcel Golding said thereafter a report outlining the committee’s views and recommendations would be presented to the Minister.
Cuban miners get NUM donation

Ronnie Grawitzky
BD 2615175 (212)

IN A move to show solidarity with Cuban miners workers who have been adversely affected by the US economic blockade, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) yesterday presented Cuban ambassador Angel Dalmau with a wide array of mining equipment, some of which had been donated by mineworkers.

NUM general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe said that during the years of apartheid, Cuba granted bursaries and opportunities for further education of black miners with no access to SA training opportunities. NUM's donation was a token of appreciation for Cuba's support. The union had purchased about 500 mining lamps, boots, safety helmets and overalls, with workers donating some of their own safety equipment, he said.

Jeremy Cronin of the SACP said the donation of protective gear by the union was a small contribution to a "new way of doing internationalism".

Dalmau said the solidarity shown by the NUM was concrete and clear. He said a number of SA companies had visited Cuba to investigate creating trade links. To date, two Durban-based companies had agreed to supply Cuba with herbicides and anthracite, he said.

While Cuba would encourage foreign investors, "it would not sell its soul to foreign investment", nor would it give up on socialism or promote privatisation, he said.
DEATH BENEFITS

Mining payouts

The R5m contribution by Anglo American and Vodacom to a fund for the dependants of 104 victims in a recent disaster was made, says a spokesman, to recognize it as a national tragedy and to indicate that Anglo does not regard it as "part of normal casualties."

The R11m committed to the fund by these groups as well as De Beers, government and others would, if wisely invested in equities, bolster long-term financial security for the dead miners' next of kin.

Without this benefit, the various forms of insurance cover now provided by the mining industry would, after a few years of double-digit inflation, leave the families of the deceased financially pressed.

Benefits accruing to them consist of various cash payments and a monthly pension.

There is, first, a funeral benefit of R5,000 (financed partly by the mining industry's assurance arm, Rand Mutual, and partly by a scheme underwritten by Old Mutual). Another cash payment is equal to 75% of two months' basic pay and fringe benefits.

Employers' and employees' contributions to the Mineworkers Provident Fund, plus the assessed profits and interest, are paid over to dependants. The average employee's benefit in the fund, which was created only in 1983, stands at about R5,000.

The largest single payment comes from the Old Mutual scheme and is equal to three years' basic pay, food and quarters. For the dependants of a typical miner who had been earning a basic monthly wage of R1,150, that would work out to R5,100.

A widow or child would, in addition to this, receive a monthly pension of R1,061, of which R424 would be for her, and the rest (in equal parts) for the children.

As each turns 18, he or she is no longer supported by the pension, which is thereby reduced. Inflation also erodes the pension, since the scheme (like most) tracks it to the extent of only about 75%.

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ECONOMY & FINANCE

The specially created fund, which has yet to be registered, will be administered by seven trustees - three each from Anglo and the NUM, and an outsider as chairman (the NUM wants Walter Sisulu).

No decisions have been made on how the monies will be deployed for the benefit of dependants (half of those who died came from Lesotho), let alone whether it will manage on their behalf the substantial death payout from Old Mutual.

NUM assistant general secretary Gwede Mantashe says it is possible some of the fund will be spent on facilities for the deceased's communities - "but not if it disadvantages the dependants. Children must not face obstacles to developing their full potential through education opportunities. We don't want to rush this, but do it properly. The normal insurance cover from Rand Mutual will meet beneficiaries' interim needs."

Some observers are sceptical of Deputy President F W de Klerk's assurance that the R5m of State monies that have been committed to the fund will not set a precedent should similar tragedies occur.
Mine safety to get immediate overhaul

BY BRUCE CAMERON

The Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs is to implement new mining safety measures immediately in an attempt to improve South Africa's poor safety record.

Speaking at a meeting of the Association of Mine Managers on Friday, Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha said serious charges had been levelled against the industry in the recent report of the Leon Commission of Inquiry into the industry.

The charges ranged from the industry not keeping adequate records of accidents to indications that the records which were kept pointed to the fact that South Africa was losing almost 1% of its workforce due to accidents every year.

Botha said that the type of accident which claimed 104 lives at Vaal Reefs on May 10, not being included in the statistics.

Botha said "There are serious charges and ones that must be remedied — and at speed.

"Those who try to justify high accident rates on the basis of our unique geology or the great depths at which we mine, cannot use their arguments to justify inadequate statistics.

"If we are to overcome this sad record, the first step is to document it and as that we know what it is we need to overcome it."

Botha said he had instructed his department to implement those recommendations (of the Leon Commission), which "we are capable of implementing and not to wait for a Cabinet decision to give us the go-ahead."

"It was not enough to be appalled by the Vaal Reefs tragedy. We will have to take steps to ensure it never happens again."

Botha said the problems in mine safety lay with the big four — gold, coal, platinum and diamonds.

Of these by far the most effective killer and mamer was gold mining, which was responsible for 95.6% of all injuries and 72.7% of all fatalities.

"Coal comes in for a fair but still significant second."

The Leon Commission said the recurring management apology, when paraphrased, was that the systems in place "are fine and the accidents are due to human errors."

Botha agreed with the commission that this was an accusation which was directed back against the industry.

He accepted much had been done, but he wanted to encourage an expansion of existing programmes. He also said he accepted there were high costs involved. However, the reduction in accidents would save millions of rands in lost productivity and in human suffering — which could not be measured in financial costs.
78 of dead
gold miners
identified
(212) Slow 29/s4s

STAFF REPORTER

At least 78 of the 194 mine-
workers killed in the disaster at
Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft this month
have been identified, according
to Anglo American spokesman
James Duncan.

Their funerals would be fina-
liised once identification and
post-mortem procedures had
been completed.

The National Union of Mine-
workers (NUM), Vaal Reefs man-
agement, representatives of the
governments of Lesotho, Swazi-
land, Mozambique, Botswana,
and South Africa, the South Afri-
can Police Service and families
of the dead were involved in or-
ganising the funerals, Duncan
said.

All parties were working ex-
tremely well together, and un-
derstood the very complex situa-
tion. They hoped to swing into
action later this week.

Duncan added that the calcu-
lation of mine pension payments
and compensation to the families
was well under way.

The mine disaster fund now
stood at more than R10-million.
Anglo and NUM officials were in
the process of setting up a board
of trustees to decide how the
money should be disbursed.

The workers were killed when
a runaway locomotive plunged
into a shaft, crushing a double-
decker cage in which they were
ascending on May 11.

Mineral and Energy Affairs
Minister Pik Botha has announce-
ed that a commission of inquiry
has been established.

It will be headed by Judge
Ramon-Leon, who headed the re-
cently completed commission of
inquiry into mine safety.

He will be assisted by an engi-
neer from Botha’s department
and an independent expert ap-
pointed by the department and
the National Union of Mine-
workers.

Donations should be paid
into First National Bank, Rissak
Street, South branch, branch
code 256605, account number
3000072230
Education 'vital to mining safety'

Michael Urquhart

MINERAL and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha had instructed his department to implement those recommendations of the Leon commission which it was able to implement without Cabinet approval, he said in a speech to the Association of Mine Managers on Friday.

Botha said the number of deaths and accidents in the SA mining industry was high "by any standards". He said the commission's findings that the general level of education amongst miners was very low should be taken seriously. The answer would seem to be to offer stepped up adult education courses and training beyond the needs of functioning in a mine. He said if miners had a chance to broaden their horizons, this had to have a positive effect on productivity and safety.

Training was often limited because of costs. But mining accidents had a cost of their own, like the millions of rands a day lost in production while a shaft was being repaired.

There was also the cost of human suffering, against which financial costs could not be measured.

He said the involvement of workers and unions as equal partners with management in the search for improved mine safety was the only way forward.

The industry also needed to work at developing a culture of safety awareness, using conditioning programmes which automatically guided people into performing procedures which promoted safety.

Management had to take the necessary steps to improve health, safety and the general working and living conditions of miners if they did not want to add impetus to nationalisation.

Workers had to realise that a drive toward unrealistic wages without improving productivity would weaken the miners' competitive position against mines in the rest of the world which would result in the closure of SA mines.

Sapa reports Botha also announced a programme to encourage economically viable small-scale mining.

Talks had been held with mining houses on creating opportunities for smaller entrepreneurs using mineral rights currently held by the larger companies.

He urged the mining industry to "set up a small miners' bureau to help aspirant and practising small miners. This could be a joint public and private sector venture."

"The mining houses also need to consider ways to make black economic empowerment a reality," he said. The appointment of new leaders in the industry would reassure labourers they had "a real stake" in the industry.
New mine safety rules aim to stop deaths
Miners killed in rockfall

Three miners were killed in a rockfall caused by an underground tremor at Kloof gold mine yesterday. The accident occurred 2,700m underground at Kloof Gold Mining Company's No 3 shaft, 50km from Johannesburg.

(212) 541-3145 31/5/95
Mass funeral for miners

JOHANNESBURG: The 104 victims of the May 10 Vaal Reefs mine disaster at the No 2 shaft of the gold mine at Orkney will be buried on June 11, the National Union of Mineworkers announced yesterday. — Sapa CT 31/5/95
Warning of dire future
if mine safety is ignored

Renée Grabitzky

MANAGEMENT accepted full responsibility for workers not being totally committed to safety on mines as a result of a previous lack of training and understanding, Association of Mine Managers of SA president David Smith said.

Speaking after the association's conference last week, Smith said it had been agreed that workers on mines must participate and "gain ownership of the whole process of safety on mines".

He said engineering solutions and procedures were insufficient in endeavours to improve mine safety.

The association supported the principles of the Leon Commission, he said, and was fully committed to the tripartite alliance between employers, employees and the state to improve mine safety.

Acting Government Mining Engineer Dick Bakker said at the conference it was government's responsibility to ensure its citizens and all those employed under its jurisdiction were working in a reasonably safe and healthy environment.

This responsibility should override its "fiscal interest" and "it must create the appropriate legislation and the mechanism through which it can enforce legislation", he said.

Bakker said an independent report submitted to the Leon Commission on an analysis of safety performance in SA mines revealed that the attitude and behaviour of many managers was that safety was common sense, unsafe workers were the problem and the number of fatalities and reportables was the "measure of the effectiveness of the safety effort".

The report also found that:

☐ Safety was not perceived as important to the survival of the industry, "therefore it is not managed as are other key business processes";
☐ No specific written safety policies existed at corporate level;
☐ Decision-making powers regarding safety rested solely with general managers;
☐ The only defined safety responsibilities were those of the general managers and safety officers;
☐ Managers for the most part did not possess sufficient knowledge of the issues that should be addressed or the most effective manner in which to address them, and
☐ Line supervision did not rigorously implement the safety-related aspects of the technical programmes in place.

Numerous interviews with workers to assess their perceptions of management's dedication to safety revealed they did not believe management was truly concerned for them or their safety.

Workers felt their safety was regarded as secondary to production and they did not have an active role to play. They did not trust the organisation, Bakker said.

He said management tended to rely on safety management systems rather than actively managing safety.

He said managers should establish specific safety performance expectations and ensure those responsible for safety understood clearly what they should be doing. They should provide the information and tools necessary to carry out their functions and hold those individuals accountable for meeting performance expectations.

He concluded that the ball was in management's court and "if we try to continue in the old way, we will face a dire future".
MINING - ACCIDENTS

1995

JUNE - DECEMBER
Warning on ‘hasty’ mine laws

Adrian Hadland

CAPE TOWN — Certain Leon commission recommendations on improving health and safety in the mining sector were overly prescriptive and could have unintended, unwanted and costly consequences, according to both the mining industry and the mineral and energy affairs department.

Addressing the National Assembly’s mineral and energy affairs committee yesterday, representatives of both groups and the National Union of Mineworkers called for the urgent finalisation and promulgation of a new Health and Safety in Mines Act.

But consultant Jurie Goldenhuys, speaking on behalf of the mining industry, said while there was pressure following the recent Vaal Reefs tragedy to improve mine safety, hastily formulated legislation could prove inappropriate.

Certain of the commission’s recommendations, including its opinion that health and safety research levies should be imposed on mines, were prescriptive and could mean “unwarranted costs”, Goldenhuys said.

They could also have a domino effect that would put mines out of business without a commensurate effect on health and safety levels.

Other “prescriptive” recommendations included the use of hydraulic props in all gold mines, the ventilation of headings in coal mines, methods for preventing flame extension in conveyor roadways, the recommended use of English in all mines in all regions and the commission’s view on mine supervisory levels.

Acting government mining engineer Dick Bakker said although the commission’s report was valuable, some recommendations fell outside its terms of reference, others were vague regarding who should implement them and many were also considered prescriptive by the department.

These included recommendations on the restructuring of inspectors’ grades and on the need for at least one health and safety representative for every 100 non-managerial employees.

The imposition of research levies contradicted acceptable principles of mining taxation and could lead to cost increases that would particularly affect marginal mines and lead to the sterilisation of SA’s ore resources, Goldenhuys said.

He said funds should be raised through taxation.

If levies could not be avoided, the ministers of finance and mineral and energy affairs should jointly approve them.

NUM national treasurer Paul Nkuna told the committee mine owners were more concerned with costs than with the lives of miners.

The NUM, together with the industry and the department, urged the committee to finalise and legislate a new Act before the end of the year.
NUM appeals for safety laws

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) appealed to the government yesterday for stricter occupational safety laws by the end of this year.

It accused mining houses of being more concerned about costs than lives.

"The mining industry tells us before you consider lives that are lost in the mining industry, you need to consider the cost," NUM national treasurer Mr Paul Nkuma told Parliament's mineral and energy affairs committee.
Mass funeral for 104 mine victims

By Abdul Milazi

The 104 Vaal Reefs Mineworkers who were crushed to death underground last month will be given a mass funeral on June 11 despite objections from relatives. The mangled bodies of the victims are still at the Orkney Mortuary.

The mineworkers were killed on May 10 when a lift cage they were travelling in was hit by a falling locomotive, sending it plummeting to the bottom of the shaft.

National Union of Mineworkers spokesman Mr Gregory Masetshelwa said the union and mine management decided to hold a mass funeral in Orkney because the bodies, which were salvaged from the wrecked lift cage, were so mangled they were beyond recognition.

After weeks of negotiations between NUM and the families, only relatives from Botswana and Swaziland agreed to a mass funeral. The group from Lesotho was still adamant that their loved ones be buried back home.

Masetshelwa said the mass funeral would take place on the planned date, whether families agreed or not. He said the condition of the corpses made it impossible to separate them.

Details of the funeral were still being finalised. But 21-year-old Mrs Marea Leema, who lost her husband Neo after only two years of marriage, is one of the family members who want to claim bodies of their next of kin.

Leema, dressed in black, stood out in the crowded crowd of mostly elderly women and men who attended the memorial service at Oppenheimer Stadium last month. She wept openly for her husband, whose body she won't be able to see. "All the families, she will one day lay flowers next to a tombstone with 104 names on it, taking comfort from the fact that her husband was part of the remains that went into the grave below."
JOHANNESBURG — Brusung pay talks start this week for South Africa's volatile gold mining industry, which last year accounted for 21.5 percent of the country's exports. But opinion is divided on whether a strike is likely.

"Neither management, nor the unions, have much leeway," Duncan Ingram of stockbrokers Edey, Rogers & Co Inc. said on Tuesday.

Pay, covering about 50 percent of a local gold mine's costs, is only one of a number of bargaining issues at the talks starting on Thursday between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the employer body, the Chamber of Mines.

The annual negotiations, were delayed by a disaster on May 16 at Anglo-American's Vaal Reefs gold mine south-west of Johannesburg in which 104 people died.

NUM, which represents about 300,000 mainly black workers in the mining industry, is demanding wage rises of 20 to 70 percent and a restructuring of the complex job grading system.

The average industry wage rise last year was 11 percent.

The mines say they are caught in a margin squeeze.

Clem Sunter, chairman of gold operations at Anglo American Corporation of South Africa Ltd., reiterated last week that jobs were at stake if productivity problems; rising costs and an unspring gold price continued. Gold was quoted at around $384 an ounce in Europe on Tuesday, Sapa-R.
Miners, back in fatal shaft

Johannesburg: Miners have returned to work in the gold shaft where 104 workers were killed last month when a runaway underground locomotive plunged down the shaft and landed on top of their lift.

A mass burial for the victims will take place in Orkney on June 11.
Mining talks focus on seven-day week

Renee Grawinski

The more effective use of capital resources and continuous operations was the focus of the first round of wage negotiations between the Chamber of Mines and the Council of Mining Unions this week.

The unions affiliated to the council include the Federation of Mining Unions, representing artisans and engineering workers, and the Mineworkers' Union representing mainly white miners.

Mineworkers' Union spokesman Fred Bond said the chamber had not tabled any wage offer in response to the union's demand for a 20% increase.

Other union demands include a five-day working week, that annual leave be increased by seven days, a 10% shift allowance, standby allowances and that overtime be increased from 6% to 8%. The union also wants bonuses for locomotive drivers and pumpmen to be negotiated at mine level, and profit sharing schemes to be negotiated separately from annual wage negotiations.

Bond said the chamber had advised the unions that the wage offer tabled would depend on the union's response to the removal of Sunday work restrictions, which could ultimately lead to a seven-day working week.

Chamber negotiator Andre Geldenhuys said discussions had revolved around the effective use of capital resources and the state of the industry.

Negotiations start today between the chamber and the National Union of Mineworkers and the chamber and officials' associations next week.
Gold mine to retrench 1900

JOHANNESBURG: About 1,900 employees of Randfontein Estates Gold Mining Company in Gauteng are to be retrenched, the company said yesterday.

An "over-complement" of about 1,900 employees was found when a revised labour plan was commissioned as a result of depleted ore reserves.

(212) 378-1516
Political Staff, Municipal Reporter, Sapa
Mine safety examined

The deaths of 104 miners at Vlas Reefs brought the question of mine safety out of the shadows.

The tragic trial of the Leote commission has revealed many grim statistics to the fore — a miner has a one-in-36 chance of dying in a career underground, more than 1 million have been seriously injured this century. Such statistics have, unfortunately, reduced the issue of mine health and safety to an overly simple question of victim and blame.

Business Report today publishes the first in a series on mining health and safety. The goal of the series, written by staff writer Ross Herbert, is to examine in a balanced way an issue that will affect thousands of South Africans for decades.

Part One: the Mining Health & Safety page focuses on the health, for Labour Minister Tito Mboweni's views turn to the Forum page.
Non-stop mining shifts could see rise in low gold share prices

Gold shares, whose prices have halved in the past nine months, are clearly out of favour with investors— but the possibility of a resurgence in gold share prices in the coming months cannot be ruled out, say analysts.

The gold mining industry is engaged in crucial negotiations with the unions and also the government on the introduction of continuous mining. A favourable outcome for the mining industry could have a major impact on mining profits.

Clive Sunter, chairman of Anglo American’s gold and uranium division, pointed out recently that the South African gold mining industry is working on only 270 days of the 365 days in a year.

It doesn’t work on Sundays, it doesn’t work on public holidays and works only half the Saturdays. No other major capital-intensive industry anywhere in the world works in this way, said Sunter.

He added that negotiations were still at an early stage. However, there is no doubt that the industry must be hoping for a favourable outcome.

Tom Dale, general manager of Gengold, said the industry could derive very substantial benefits from the introduction of continuous mining. But it would be simplistic to think that if the industry worked every day it would boost its output by a third.

Mines with limited hauling capacity would not benefit to any great extent.

But the introduction of continuous mining was only half the story. The industry had been going for 100 years and was still following many of the practices started then.

What the industry required was the freedom to negotiate conditions of work with its people so as to be able to work in a more flexible way.

He said the age of the industry meant that in many mines it took a considerable time for workers to reach the stope face. He estimated that as a result, some spent as little as six hours and possibly even as little as four hours in productive work. But introducing longer but fewer shifts could overcome this problem. This had been done successfully at St Helena.

Dale pointed out that introducing more flexible working conditions did not lead to less employment, but to more employment. It enabled the mines to expand operations into more lower grade areas, which required employing a larger workforce. This had also happened at St Helena and had resulted in more jobs.

There was no industry in South Africa which came anywhere near matching the potential for large-scale job creation, he said.
Labour bill should be passed this year

Significant progress has been made in South Africa towards creating a democracy, but challenges remain that need to be tackled before we can achieve our goals.

Our friends and colleagues internationally should not be alarmed when differences of opinion are expressed — sometimes fairly forcefully — by the various political, social and business forces in our country.

On May 10, 1995, we received news of an accident at Vaal Reeds gold mine. A 12-ton carriage and locomotive plunged into a shaft and fell onto a cage, killing all 104 mine workers inside.

This shameful and tragic accident raised awareness of health and safety in the workplace, especially on the mines. A commission of enquiry has been appointed to investigate this accident.

South Africa has a history of mining accidents. For example, in 1980, 437 mine workers were killed in a coal mine disaster when a roof collapsed. In 1986, 177 were killed in a polymerisation fire at the KwaZulu Cold Mine.

Commission of Enquiry, headed by the Supreme Court judge Mr Justice Leon found that our mining legislation was inadequate.

The commission recommended the overhaul of our mining legislation. Special emphasis was placed on the education of mine workers and the importance of implementing internationally accepted worker rights.

Health and safety will only improve once a culture of occupational health and safety awareness is created in South Africa.

**MY TURN**

Labour minister Tito Mboweni addressed yesterday's 82nd International Labour Conference on labour safety standards.

It is against this tragic background that we will support the regulation of safety and health in mines internationally.

On February 18 this year, we launched a statutory body called the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) aimed at building social partnership in South Africa. The development of this council will ensure that the spirit of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is alive in our country.

One of the key issues before Nedlac is a draft Labour Relations Bill submitted by the department of labour for negotiation and finalisation. Sparks have flown on some of the more important issues such as centralised bargaining, the closed shop and workplace forums.

Business and labour have tabled their opening negotiating positions and, despite what may look like a breakdown in negotiations, the process is on track.

It appears that all the parties are determined to reach agreement for the bill to become law this year. It has been carefully drafted with the technical and financial support of the ILO.

Global restructuring and the post-Marikana developments have magnified the three main challenges which face labour, namely poverty, unemployment and social disintegration.

The Social Summit provided an excellent opportunity for us to seek international co-operation and co-ordination in addressing these problems.

The Social Clause has provoked one of the most contentious yet fruitful debates in recent ILO history.

We have a far clearer idea of the type of relationship that should exist between labour standards and international trade as well as how such a relationship can be established.

Global restructuring should not be at the expense of social development and justice and we should therefore continue to oppose the undermining of social justice on the pretext of economic growth.

It is unacceptable for any country to achieve a competitive edge over other countries on the back of sub-human labour standards.

We believe that the ILO should play a decisive role in achieving and maintaining civilized international labour standards.

Support the director-general's initiative in urging member states to ratify core ILO conventions and encourage the office to engage in more promotional activities and technical cooperation. These conventions are designed to enable states to ratify and respect key conventions.

ILO membership requires respect for the rights of association and collective bargaining. We believe it is time to expand the net of axiomatic rights to include forced and child labour, as well as blatant forms of discrimination.

Our Cabinet has approved ratification of the conventions, which deal with freedom of association and collective bargaining. These have been submitted to Parliament.

A group of "human rights" conventions may warrant a supervisory mechanism that is both more specific and more agile than the existing structures.

Tighter budgetary planning and implementation should be a permanent feature of all our organisations. This cannot be attained by indiscriminate budget cuts.

Last year's conference adopted a resolution committing the ILO to a programme of technical co-operation in South Africa. The office has met all their obligations. Although, not all the items contained in last year's resolution have been dealt with, that is largely because the technical co-operation actually delivered reflected our South African priorities.

Co-operation was in the areas of labour law reform, labour market policy development, and the reform of the public service.

There are other areas of technical co-operation that are being elaborated, namely in the sphere of capacity building for department of labour and the establishment of a Commission for Confrontation, Mediation and Arbitration.

Our concern now is to ensure that the joint activities started are sustained. The policy advice that has enabled us to implement our plans must be consolidated.

The demand for the training of new personnel and re-training of the old, the development of new structures and programmes.

Ultimately, the policy will involve the systematic implementation of a qualitatively new system of labour relations — employment policy in South Africa.

The effectiveness of ILO technical co-operation was complicated by the absence of an ILO office in South Africa as well as inadequate international experience of the labour department.

However, structures will soon be in place to overcome these problems.

Negotiations on the establishment of an ILO office in southern Africa have been completed and an agreement to establish such an office has been signed.

These are exciting and challenging times in South Africa and we are determined to succeed in creating a new and healthy world of work.

Also see Background and Analysis page
The scrapping of the statutory prohibition on Sunday work was the focus on the first day of negotiations yesterday between the Chamber of Mines and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

NUM said the chamber had refused to put an offer on the table until the union had agreed to this demand, which could hinder "the start of meaningful negotiations."

NUM general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe said the union was "not prepared to discuss Sunday work as a mere legal requirement, as there is more to it". It would not save the industry on its own and had to be assessed holistically. The industry could not retain international competitiveness if it continued to rely on an unstable workforce and migrant labour.

The chamber said the industry faced serious problems, including reduced gold production which had to be viewed against the background of rising production costs. Against this backdrop the union was demanding increases exceeding 100% in some cases. It said Sunday work would allow greater flexibility to negotiate rostered shifts for production sections.

The union wants a minimum wage of R65 for certain marginal mines and up to R1 250 for others. The chamber has proposed to extend two-tier bargaining to help solve some problems at mine level.
NUM says no
Sunday work

BY JUSTICE MALALA
LABOUR REPORTER

The National Union of Mineworkers has rejected a Chamber of Mines demand for support in approaching the Government to scrap legislation prohibiting Sunday work.

Speaking after the first round of annual wage negotiations yesterday, NUM secretary-general Kgalema Motlanthe said Sunday work would not save the mining industry and his union wanted to discuss a more holistic approach to problems, including job grading and training, the migrant labour system, contracting, overall productivity and a scrapping of the eight lowest pay grades.

Chamber chief negotiator Andre Geldenhuys said the union was "effectively demanding increases of some 20% to 120% on gold mines and some 20% to 135% on collieries".
Sad journey from Qoaling to Orkney cemetery

Mathole Phokojo: leaves a shattered family in a Lesotho village, wondering why he had to die in the Vaal Reefs disaster, reports TEOF MOTHIBELE

From a distance, Gaitekeng's manshabs look like conical hats planted on mushroom hills. Beneath these stone manshabs, deep within the bowels of the earth, migrant labourers dig, haunted there by simple economies they need jobs.

Mathole Phokojo was one such worker. He left his starved family snuggled in mountainous Lesotho and travelled to South Africa to work underground at Vaal Reefs.

But Phokojo is no more. He has become a statistic one of the 100 workers who plunged to their deaths in the Vaal Reefs disaster. But it is at Qoaling village, Lesotho, that one realises the magnitude of the catastrophe.

The surviving eight members of the Phokojo family, not only here to bear the grief and pain of losing a son, a father and a husband — they have also lost the sole breadwinner.

His family members, huddled in the grey-mud house Mathole built with money skimmed and saved, stare at a future as bare and hard as the mountains around Qoaling.

"He was the only hope I had. He was the pillar of this family. I have been left with the burden of the family," says Mathole's non conducive mother.

Mourners pay their last respects

Hundreds of mourners braved the chilly weather yesterday morning and gathered at the Sesotho stadium in Maseru where a memorial service for the Vaal Reefs gold mine disaster victims was held.

The bodies of 16 Lesotho nationals, crushed to death at Vaal Reefs, were returned to the mountain kingdom for burial by their families. Most of the bodies were taken to the stadium for the service, three were taken directly to their respective villages.

Depot Prasa Manager Phokojo himself, Queen Mmalo Motheo and members of the Lesotho government attended the hour-long service.

Miners still a pull for the jobs

The Vaal Reefs gold mine disaster has not stopped job-hungry Lesotho men from queuing up for employment in the mines.

Despite the horror accounts of the Vaal Reefs disaster, these men continue to camp outside the offices of the Employment Bureau in Maseru in the hope that their names will be among the chosen few recruited to take up jobs.

Asked why they were still prepared to go to the mines despite the risks involved, they said it was preferable to facing starvation with their families.

"We really have no choice but to sacrifice rather than starve," said Lefo Mokose to the approval of his colleagues.

— Staff Reporter.
Mines buried in masse...
15 000 at miners’ funeral

Renee Grawitzky

MORE than 15 000 workers, heads of state, political leaders and Anglo American representatives gathered at Orkney in the Free State yesterday for the funeral service for 47 of the 104 mineworkers killed at Vaal Reefs gold mine a month ago.

The sound of wailing women accompanied a procession of 47 hearses bearing the remains of mineworkers to Ernest Oppenheimer Stadium.

At the behest of family members, the bodies of the remaining mineworkers were sent home for private burial. Three bodies have yet to be identified and family members have been asked to enact in identification.

NUM president James Motlatsi set the scene with his call that it was not the “day to deliver speeches blaming each other.”

He said: “The tragedy has happened and we are only here to deal with the consequences.”

SACP secretary-general Charles Nkaku, however, accused Vaal Reefs management of gross negligence and although the accident was still being investigated, it was clear that major negligence had led to the locomotive plunging down Shaft No 2.

He said “Management carries the responsibility for safety on the mines, they must carry full responsibility for what will go into the annals of SA history as the Vaal Reefs disaster.”

Motlatsi announced that Walter Sisulu and Helen Suzman would be responsible for overseeing the Vaal Reefs disaster fund.

Continued on Page 2

Funeral

Continued from Page 1

which has raised nearly R11m.

The fund would initially assist the families and communities of the mineworkers killed, but in the long term could assist other dependants and communities.

Motlatsi called on Anglo American to provide substantially more for those who had died.

Anglo director Bobby Godsell said management would seek to discover all the facts of the accident and would give total support and assistance to the inquiry.

He said, “We commit ourselves to learn from the findings to ensure such an accident never occurs again.”

Northwest region premier Popo Molele said the accident had “seized the attention of the nation to focus on safety on mines.”

He called on employers, workers and government to “apply their minds afresh” to try to reduce mine accidents.

Molele said neither “active participants” of the RDP in the regions instead of being seen as providers of jobs where someone “is likely to die.”

The funeral at the Orkney cemetery went off without incident despite a threat by AWB members to protest against black people walking over the grave of an AWB member buried there.
BEREAVED: Relatives of miners who died in an accident at Vaal Reefs gold mine on May 10 pay their respects at the funeral of 47 of the 104 men who died.

Vaal Reefs tragedy:
47 miners buried

The Argus Correspondent
ORKNEY — A pall of sadness hung over this dry dusty town as 47 miners were buried.

The number was less than half the 104 killed in the Vaal Reefs mining disaster, but the hearse was nose to tail around the stadium before leaving for the cemetery.

The miners, killed on May 10 when a runaway locomotive plunged down a shaft and landed on a man-cage, were buried in Orkney cemetery yesterday — the first black people to be buried there — despite protests last week from the Afrikaner Weerstands beweging (AWB).

According to Anglo American spokesman James Duncan, discussions with the AWB enabled the company to allay concerns that the crowd of about 15,000 would get out of control and desecrate surrounding graves.

The graveside scene was a tragic one of family members going up and down the 17 rows of three graves, desperately searching for their loved ones after the coffins had been lowered into the ground.

After the official ceremony conducted by Dr. Beyers Naude, some families who had brought their own priests, performed private, traditional ceremonies.

Earlier, at the Oppenheimer Stadium, a distraught woman started to weep as the hearse brought the first coffins into the stadium, but soon the air was filled with the haunting cries of many women.

Others collapsed and had to be given medical assistance by paramedics whose bright orange overalls contrasted sharply with the mourners’ dark clothing.

Before the ceremony, the hearse lined up on either side of the podium facing inwards with the simple coffins on trolleys behind them. While the national flag flew at half mast, black flags flew on flagpoles along the top of the grandstands.

Most speakers talked of the scale of human tragedy, and how mine management should work to prevent such an incident recurring.

National Union of Mineworkers president James Mkhlati said that former ANC deputy president Walter Sisulu and former Democratic Party MP Helen Suzman would administer the disaster relief fund which stands at more than R1 million. He said every cent would go to victims’ families.

Northwest Premier Popo Molefe said the miners needed to be seen as “more than just a place where people have a job, and are likely to die, but must also play a role in uplifting the communities they are in.”

Anglo American executive director Bobby Godsell said the company hoped to learn from the accident, to ensure it never happened again.

At last respects: Guards of honour stand at the coffins of the 47 miners who were buried yesterday. The funeral was delayed because of difficulty in identifying the victims.
Guard of honour ... forty-seven hearse and coffins are lined up at yesterday’s funeral for some of the miners killed at Vaal Reefs mine.

Thousands weep again for men killed in mining tragedy

BY MICHAEL SPARKS and HOFWELL HADEBE

Orkney — Forty-seven miners were buried yesterday in this dry and dusty town — less than half the 104 killed in the Vaal Reefs mining disaster, but 15 000 gathered in a stadium to mourn their passing.

Hearse were lined up nose-to-tail around the stadium before leaving for the cemetery.

There had been protests from the Afrikaner Weerstands beweging last week about the mass funeral taking place in Orkney’s previously whites-only cemetery.

Anglo American spokesman Stanley Duncan said discussions with the AWB had enabled the mining company to allay fears that the mourners would get out of control and desecrate surrounding graves.

Relatives went up and down the 17 rows of graves, seeking a final glance at their loved ones after the coffins were lowered into the ground.

After the official ceremony conducted by Dr Beyers Naude, some families, who had brought their own priests, performed private ceremonies to bury the dead according to traditional custom.

Barber, at the Oppenheimer Stadium, a woman started to wail as the hearses brought the first coffins into the stadium, but soon the air was filled with the haunting chimes of many women.

Negligence

National Union of Mineworkers president James Motlatsi said that former ANC deputy president Walter Sisulu and former Democratic Party MP Helen Suzman would administer the disaster relief fund which currently stands at more than R11-million.

Anglo American executive director Bobby Godsell said the company hoped to learn from the accident, to ensure it never happened again.

SA Communist Party general secretary Charles Nqakula, representing the tripartite alliance, said the disaster showed “gross negligence” on the part of management.

Also present were government representatives from Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Mozambique.

The information gathered during the course of the investigation of the disaster is to be submitted to the Attorney-General’s office today, according to a Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs spokesman.

The spokesman said the information had been collated by people from the Government Mining Engineer’s office, and included affidavits from people who had information that might assist the investigation.

He added that a decision would have to be made by the Transvaal Attorney-General Jan D’Olivera on whether the investigation and request should be conducted jointly.
LAST RESPECTS... More than 15 000 people from all over Southern Africa yesterday paid their last respects to 42 of the 104 miners buried—Orkney in the North West.

PIC: LEN KUIN

Weeping as mine victims are buried

By Abdul Milazi
Labour Reporter

The South African national flag flew at half-mast as 45 coffins containing the remains of some of the victims of the Vaal Reefs Gold Mine disaster lined the graves at Oppenheimer Stadium in Orkney in Free State yesterday.

104 miners were crushed to death on May 10 when a locomotive plunged down a shaft, hitting a lift cage carrying the workers and sending it plummeting to the bottom of the shaft.

The funeral was a scene of high emotion.

Hardened miners who had descended into the depths of the earth many times without a care for the attendant risks, sat in disbeliefing silence.

It was worse for the families of the victims. Men, women and children wept openly as the coffins were lowered into the graves.

The remains of 49 other victims were buried in Lesotho on Friday after their families had demanded the right to personally bury their dead.

Sorrowful scenes as 45 coffins line graves at Oppenheimer Stadium in Free State

10 other miners are unaccounted for.

This is understandable as what was buried was mostly mangled human flesh.

Anglo American Corporation executive director Mr Bobby Godsell told mourners that more than R11 million had been donated to the Vaal Reefs Disaster Fund.

The trustees were visiting families of the victims to assess their needs.

The National Union of Mineworkers president Mr James Medlana said every cent in the fund would go towards helping families of the victims.

Energy and Mineral Affairs Minister Mr Piki Botha, who represented the Government, said the recommendations of the Leon Commission into health and safety on the mines would be "urgently" implemented to prevent similar disasters in the future.

However, South African Communist Party general secretary Mr Charles Nqakula charged that the disaster was not an act of God but the result of negligence on the part of mine owners.

Anglo American Corporation

"Management must carry full responsibility for what will go down in the annals of South African history as the Vaal Reefs disaster," Nqakula said.
Miners' deaths:  
Decision soon  
on prosecution  
(Johannesburg, 13/6/95)  
About 50  
statements relating to last  
month's accident in which 104  
people were killed at Vaal Reefs  
mine have been handed to the  
ofice of the attorney-general, ac-  
gcording to a spokesman.  

He said Transvaal Attorney-  
General Jan D'Oliveira hoped to  
make a decision "as soon as pos-  
sible" on whether to prosecute  
anyone for the miners' death.  

The decision hopefully would  
be made before the end of next  
week, he said.  

If Mr D'Oliveira decided to  
prosecute, there would be no  
need for an inquest.  
However, if there was no pro-  
escution, a separate inquest and  
investigation would be held, ap-  
pointed by Justice Minister Dul-  
lah Omar.  

On Sunday, 47 of those who  
died were buried in the Orkney  
cemetery. The other 57 are being  
buried by their families.
MINING HEALTH & SAFETY

At the very heart of any mining operation is the understanding that work should be done safely and efficiently.

By Ross Herbert

If you can't actually go out and change the culture on the mine, it's not going to work. There is no doubt about it. It is the only way. If you have been in the past is not conducive to employees questioning things. Probably one of the most difficult things to change is culture,” said Karl van Gessel, mining engineer who is responsible for safety programmes at Anglo American Southern Division.

“We need to experiment with new ways of working. South African industry is searching for ways to create cultures where employees will come forward,” said van Gessel.

“I frankly don’t think we have any other way out,” said Mike Hermanus, who investigated and reported on health and safety issues to the Leoon commission on behalf of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

The shortest cut out of that old de se is involving employees with proper training, not just in the way that in the past there is. As the commission noted, a sizable amount of commendable “educational activity in the industry regarding health and safety.”

Opinions of safety training were less positive. You have to look at what the quality of safety training is. It is not about telling on non-compliance,” said Saiz Jonas, national health and safety education co-ordinator for NUM.

Inos noted that this has been lost over such issues, from back to where they are supposed to have a refresh course once a year. Only then can they work at the course, which often does not occur or must be attended during the workers’ own time. Workers would be expected to attend courses offer any meaningful courses on rock mechanics to the general workforce.

Van Gessel does not agree entirely! “Skills training and safety training is actually pretty good. Why do we agree with the NUM submission that it is as good as it can be? Do this because it's what we say must do it. This is generalised because of the interview in the programme.”

At a recent conference on mine safety, Fleur Plemmer, NUM health and safety co-ordinator, noted the experience of a shift boss who decided to implement the use of hydro supports, generally considered the best form of support.

His workers, used to pipes and wooden blocks, rejected “They did not like the look of it.”

"If you can’t actually go out and change the culture on the mine, it’s not going to work. There is no doubt about it. It is the only way. If you have been in the past is not conducive to employees questioning things. Probably one of the most difficult things to change is culture,” said Karl van Gessel, mining engineer who is responsible for safety programmes at Anglo American Southern Division. "We need to experiment with new ways of working. South African industry is searching for ways to create cultures where employees will come forward,” said van Gessel. "I frankly don’t think we have any other way out,” said Mike Hermanus, who investigated and reported on health and safety issues to the Leoon commission on behalf of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). The shortest cut out of that old de se is involving employees with proper training, not just in the way that in the past there is. As the commission noted, a sizable amount of commendable “educational activity in the industry regarding health and safety.”

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ELANDSRAND INITIATIVES

Anglo Elandrand has been experimenting with new ways of communicating about safety and productivity. Safety-related videos are now being shown on televisions in the underground areas where accidents used to be frequent.

The mine has also improved safety training courses by developing 3D computer models to illustrate the principles of rock mechanics and the proper placement of underground supports. To help cross-language barriers, abstract production concepts are acted out in "industrial theatre" presentations.

Elandrand has also proposed a study project, which was accepted by the Safety in Mining Research Advisory Committee, to use computer virtual reality images to practice installing supports in an animated world that can safely "collapse" on the miner when support techniques are applied incorrectly.

ROCK FACE ACCIDENTS

The highest number of underground deaths and injuries occur within two metres of the rock face, as shown by the graph on the left. The level of risk could be significantly reduced by improved support in critical areas and by inspection training.

DANGEROUS FACE

Rock falls and rock bursts are major causes of death and injury, particularly at the rock face where drilling occurs. The government mining engineer has concluded that 81 percent of rock burst accidents are caused by a failure to properly inspect overhanging rock.

TRACKING PRODUCTION

Mining industry profit has slipped, and management has attributed this partly to a declining work ethic and a subsequent fall in productivity. But, as shown in the graph on the left, productivity has been rising over the long term when assessed by tons of ore milled per employee.
R11-m aid for victims’ families

Widow’s words: “I don’t want the money, I want my husband”

Mr Bobby Godsell says trustees of the Vaal Reefs Mine Disaster Fund are busy visiting the families to determine their needs. Forty-five of the 104 miners, who were crushed to death when a runaway locomotive hit their cage on May 10, were buried after a mass funeral in Orkney on Sunday.

National Union of Mineworkers spokesman Mr Gregory Mshelela said the R11 million would be shared by the families of the victims, irrespective of union affiliation.

Most of the miners were from Lesotho, while others were from Botswana, Swaziland and South Africa.

Some of the families from Lesotho insisted on taking the remains of their loved ones for burial at home, despite the condition of the corpses. Many were crushed beyond recognition when the cage plummeted down the shaft.

On Sunday the mangled bodies of the miners were burned in Orkney and the dust settled over the incident.

Maybe the R11 million in the Vaal Reefs Mine Disaster Fund and the benefits due to them will help to ease the pain and financial burden of the families, most of whom have lost breadwinners.

One weeping widow at the mass funeral said: “If I don’t want the money, I want my husband.”

The money will help in the short term but will never bring back loved ones.
Ergo, NUM agree on pay, bonus issues

Renee Grawitzky (212) 3014614

THE East Rand Gold and Uranium Company (Ergo) and the National Union of Mineworkers agreed yesterday to a 10% across-the-board increase and the introduction of broad banding which reduced the number of grades.

Ergo, considered to be part of the gold mining industry, agreed to a new minimum of R1,345 a month.

The union proposed introducing broad banding and it was agreed that the current seven grades would be reduced to four.

Ergo management said the broad banding exercise would be conducted over the next year with NUM participation.

NUM's Gauteng organiser Archie Paledi said the establishment of a committee to deal with job grading issues would enable members to understand the question of skills "and the payment of workers according to skills acquired."

The parties agreed to a revised employee profit share scheme based on affordability, with profits earned above budget shared with the workers.

In addition, NUM representatives would be involved with the calculation and monitoring of the bonus on a monthly basis.

The parties agreed to establish a medical aid forum to discuss alternative medical aid schemes as well as the issue of traditional healers.
Obsessed with the socially costs of mining industry

Ross Kemp has written the report, which looks at the occupational health at the Cramlington of South Rocks, East Durham.

The report found that there is an increase in mental health issues among workers in the mining industry. The study suggests that the mining industry is putting workers at risk of depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders.

The report also highlights the lack of support for workers' mental health in the mining industry. Many workers feel that they are not being given the necessary support to cope with the stresses of their job.

The report recommends that the mining industry should take steps to improve the mental health of workers. This includes providing better support for workers, as well as implementing systems to monitor and prevent mental health issues.

The report also calls for the government to provide more funding for mental health services in the mining industry. This would allow workers to access the support they need to cope with the stresses of their job.

The report suggests that the mining industry needs to take action to improve the mental health of its workers. This includes providing better support and resources, as well as implementing systems to monitor and prevent mental health issues.
Negotiations extended by miners, De Beers

René Groswitzky

THE National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and De Beers are to continue wage negotiations on June 26.

Parties were unable to make progress on a number of issues last week.

The union has revised its wage increase demand to 16% and the company is offering between 5% and 6%.

The current minimum is R124 a month.

NUM said agreement had been reached on the establishment of a committee to investigate job grading and broad banding, and on an audit of non-racial conditions of employment.

The company had refused to negotiate further on wages until the union had stated its position on affirmative action and public holidays.

NUM negotiator Gwede Mantashe said the union—loosely American strategy to force the union into a strike this year

De Beers said it would respond on the remaining agenda items after it had considered the union's reply to the outstanding issues at the meeting later this month.

Union demands still on the table include subcontracting, increased training leave for union office bearers and an increase in annual leave.

The union has dropped its demand for workplace forums which had been unable to respond on affirmative action, as the company's document on the issue had been presented on the eve of the meeting.

He said "It seems to me that De Beers are using a similar strategy to that used in the Chamber negotiations where conditions are put on negotiating. Therefore we see this as an..."
Michael Urquhart

The 10% wage increase at Anglo American’s Ergo gold dump retreatment operations would probably not set the trend for the industry, sources said at the weekend.

Underground mines, many of which were facing serious cost squeezes, would not be able to afford such a high increase, they said.

The poor performance of the majority of SA mines, which analysts said were largely related to labour unrest, meant unions were not in a strong position to push for large basic wage increases.

Mine management would be aiming at a lower basic wage increase and some form of profit sharing associated with productivity. Management would also be pushing for continuous operations which would lead to better utilisation of capital.

One analyst said with labour making up 50% of the total costs of a mine, a 10% wage increase would translate directly into a 5% increase in total working costs. "Unless the gold price did something spectacular," mines would not be able to afford such an increase in working costs, he said.

This was especially true for the numerous marginal mines in SA. According to Chamber of Mines figures, in the first quarter of 1995, 13 gold mines were unable to fund their capital expenditure programmes from their own earnings.

At Ergo, which sourced all its income from the treatment of gold bearing slimes and sand dumps, the situation was different as it was a profitable producer with high margins. There was also not the same necessity for spending on safety.

Mines could often use spending on extra safety procedures as part of the bargaining package to keep down wage increases. Issues other than wage increases would probably be of greater importance in the current round of wage negotiations.

Chamber of Mines economist Roger Baxter said mines would give the issue of continuous operations priority and that it would have benefits for all stakeholders.

He said the ability to have flexible work practices and continuous operations would influence the level of wage increases.
JOHANNESBURG: Anglo-American Corporation may have to close 11 shafts at three gold mines in the northern Free State before the end of the year because of low productivity.

The closures would entail the loss of 32,000 jobs.

Unless productivity improves, a third of the shafts could be shut down within six weeks.

Mr Ken Dicks, regional manager of Freegold, the world's largest gold mining complex, said greater productivity was the only solution.

"The slower you work, the more ore you lock up. It becomes unavailable. We're not asking people to work harder, but as they did in 1993."

Anglo-American spokesman Mr James Duncan said "Freegold has serious productivity problems. If there is not a turnaround, shafts will close and people will lose their jobs."

The survival of the shafts depended on cooperation between management and mineworkers' unions on core issues, he said. An agreement on Sunday mining was "vital, as was.a more productive approach to public holidays.

The closure of 11 shafts was "a worst-case scenario," Mr Duncan said. — Sapa.
NUM accepts idea of Sunday work

Sunday work The first offer, based on refusal of Sunday work, provided for a 3% increase on gold mines and a 4% increase on coal mines. If the union agreed to Sunday work, the industry was willing to offer 5.5% on gold mines and 6% on coal mines. The offers did not cover Anglo American mines or Randgold's marginal Durban Roodepoort Deep.

Anglo American indicated it intended tabling a separate proposal that would encompass an incentive bonus scheme.

Continued on Page 2

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NUM (212) 80 22 16 95

Continued from Page 1

Anglo spokesman James Duncan said, "We can confirm that we have made proposals to both the Council of Mining Unions and the NUM on an incentive scheme. We intend tabling a basic wage offer, but we have tabled an incentive scheme first. We hope to have feedback on the incentive scheme from the council tomorrow morning. The NUM has requested elaboration on the proposals."

NUM general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe said that because Anglo had not tabled an offer it was difficult for the union to formulate a response. The NUM's opening wage demand was a minimum wage of R905 for marginal mines and up to R1 325 for others, with general increases in excess of 80%. The union indicated acceptance in principle of Sunday work, provided workers enjoyed a significant share of the financial gains it would bring.
'44 miners killed each month'

Political Staff

MINING accidents have claimed the lives of 760 workers — about 44 a month — since January last year.

Replying to a question tabled in the Senate, Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Ptk Botha also disclosed that 10 854 miners had been injured in work-related accidents between January 1 last year and May 31 this year.

These figures include the 104 workers who died at Vaal Reefs on May 10 as well as the workers injured in that tragedy.

Last year 485 workers were killed and 7 899 injured in mining accidents.

So far this year, 275 workers have died and 2 965 have been injured in mining accidents.

Mr Botha said the accidents had been investigated in a general sense by the Leon commission of inquiry into safety and health in the mining industry.
Mine workers' productivity could rise

BY DEREK TOMMEY
MINING EDITOR

Hopes are rising in the gold mining industry that the workers are starting to respond to the message that if they don't work more effectively their jobs could be at risk.

Ken Docks, regional general manager of Freegold, Anglo American's giant Free State mine, said he had been heartened by the fact that no workers had taken time off on Monday afternoon to take part in the demonstration organised by Cosatu.

He added that at a subsequent meeting with union leaders they had highlighted this fact.

Campaign

In recent weeks Docks has been warning that unless worker productivity at the mine improved to somewhere near the levels of 1993, there was a risk that the mine would end up closing its marginal shafts with a potential loss of 32 000 jobs.

He said management at Freegold has been conducting a major campaign in recent months to win the support of workers for its plans to keep the mine's shafts in operation.

Consultants had been called in to install a work ethic among workers and explain why this was so necessary to the future of the mine and the worker's livelihood.

A mining official said there had been a steady decline in profitability at Freegold for more than a year.
South Africa has made an implicit judgment that the rewards of mining are worth the risks

By Jim Smith

Seeing straight on mine safety

Complaining about health and safety hazards in the South African mining industry is a bit like objecting that driving is dangerous.

No one suggests that mining can be carried out without risk, especially at the depths required to mine. The key is making it as inescapable as accident-free roads.

Given the dominant role of mining in the South African economy, a social judgment has implicitly been made that the reward is an acceptable trade-off for the risk.

Yet when you choose to drive, you impose the risk of accidents on yourself in return for the value of free movement. Underground miners, in contrast, can hardly be said to be the primary beneficiaries of the reward gained for the very considerable personal risks they take each day.

The risks have always been grave for miners of all races, as Elaine Katz's study of sitz on the mines shows. The exposure to danger among black miners has been most troubling, given that alternative means of earning a living for blacks were restricted by apartheid laws until very recently—and the reward was so small.

The racial overtones of the debate on mining health and safety add to the charged atmosphere of discussion. At times of accidents such as the one at Vaal Reefs, the four key issues on mining health and safety must be addressed.

Report this month sought to avoid press gang the easy emotional levers, and instead look at areas of practical concern where real improvements might be made. Staff writer Ross Herbert took forward the Leon commission's concerns, and presented some personal observations from those laterally at the railroad.

Several key points emerged:

- The issue of TB and its HIV implications

While safety issues gain most of the attention at times of accidents, the quiet surge in TB poses a far more insidious threat to far more people. The question of testing for HIV as well as TB among recruits needs to be re-examined.

- Record-keeping in general

A recurring theme was the need to improve data collection and record-keeping in the industry. In particular, dust-sampling techniques appear to be inconsistently applied, making comparative analysis difficult.

- Rock mechanics training

Although the mines have invested heavily in rock mechanics specialists, their knowledge is not effectively communicated to miners.

- Underground supports

The issues noted that regarding both the type of supports used and their handling, day to day practice often differs from policy, resulting in a greater risk of rockbursts.

- Inadequate union skills

The anecdotal evidence supports the view that the unions have been hard-hit by the attrition of experts into politics, reducing their contribution to the health and safety debate.

- Health and safety refresher training

Workers are required to go through only a 30-minute refresher course each year.

- The autocratic culture

While no one questions that discipline on mines is essential, the issue of standards and the culture of the system are worrying. It is not unusual for workers to feel that they should do things, not just what they should do.

- Delays in resolving disability disputes

Other complaints and claims that have gone unheeded for more than a year can take years to process. The credibility of the disability system into doubt.

Most of these concerns have been raised, and explored in detail by the Leon commission. The issue of the reliability of the machinery and energy systems—appear to have the will to follow up. Any delay will only add to the tragedy of Vaug Reefs.

In my debut as a rugby writer a few weeks back, I correctly identified Joost van der Westhuizen as South Africa's most powerful weapon.

Since then, Jonah has swallowed Wales and everything else in his path, and may now even make the mistake of trying to transfer his skills to American gridiron. He did.

And the haka has proved fearless.

The Springboks should now drink from their own deep cultural well. Why not bring a price singer onto the pitch tomorrow? And how about some Zulu dancing from the Bok frontline? We too have our muti. Boks 27, All Blacks 22
Methane discovered in Zimbabwe: A Zimbabwe mining company has discovered methane gas at a site in western Zimbabwe, in an exercise that could culminate in the country's first methane gas mine being developed. Paul Trump, a director of Shangani Energy Exploration, said yesterday three gas-producing test wells had already been drilled over 177km. "We have managed to produce some gas, but I am not at liberty to say how much," Trump said, declining to say whether the company would proceed to open a mine.

Joint venture to boost mine safety: HL&H Mrung Timber has embarked on an R8 million joint venture with the Swiss-based multinational MBT Holdings. Announcing this earlier this week, HL&H and MBT Holdings would contribute expertise and equipment that would improve mine safety underground.

Britannica goes on-line: Encyclopaedia Britannica has announced an agreement with Time Warner's Pathfinder Internet subsidiary to integrate and market its reference works on the public computer network. Computer owners with access to the World Wide Web portion of the Internet will be able to reach Britannica on-line through Time Warner's on-line operation, called Pathfinder.

Agricultural co-op chamber formed: The Agricultural Co-operative Business Chamber (ACBC), representing co-operatives with a total annual turnover of R22 billion, was established on Monday at a special congress of the Co-operative Council of the South African Agricultural Union (SAAU). The chamber's chairman, Charles van der Merwe, said it would replace the council.
NUM, chamber discussions continue

Negotiations continue today between the Chamber of Mines and the National Union of Mineworkers with the core issue being the move towards continuous operations. NUM assistant general secretary Gwede Mantashe said yesterday it was incorrect to portray that the union had accepted the chamber's proposal for Sunday work.

Mantashe said "Sunday work was not the issue, but rather the restructuring of the mining industry."

He said one element of industrial restructuring could be Sunday work and the movement towards continuous operations.

Mantashe said within the context of industrial restructuring the industry would have to consider a whole range of issues.
Big improvement expected in mine safety standards

Adrian Hedland

CAPE TOWN — Substantial improvements in safety and health standards on SA's mines were likely to result from Cabinet's approval this week of the recommendations of the Leon commission, Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha said.

Immediate steps would be taken to draft a new Safety and Health in Mines Act while a range of structures would be established or formalised in a bid to curb what the commission called "unacceptably high" rates of death, injury and disease in the sector.

Botha said both the Cabinet and the National Assembly's mineral and energy affairs committee had expressed consensus on the commission's findings and recommendations which were published in March.

A Mining Regulation Advisory Committee, which has been set up on a voluntary basis but which would be formally established under the new Act, would commence urgent investigations into ground fall accidents, underground haulage and transport accidents, occupational health, coal mine explosions and respirable dust, Botha said.

Tripartite task groups — involving government, labour and management in the sector — dealing with each of these problems would be in place soon.

Among the major reforms recommended by the commission, and approved by Cabinet and the committee, are improved training and human resource development, the entrenchment in legislation of the right to refuse work in dangerous conditions and the creation of tripartite bodies to review legislation and regulations.

The following tripartite bodies were endorsed by the Cabinet: a Mine Health and Safety Council, a Mining Regulatory Advisory Body, a Safety in Mines Research Advisory Committee, a Mining Qualifications Authority and a Mining Occupational Health Advisory Committee.

The principle of tripartism ran through the commission's report, Botha said. "The department is a proponent of this and has already introduced mechanisms to ensure that employers consult with employees organisations before any exemption from the Minerals Act or regulations is considered."

A Publications and Statistics Committee has also been formed which will be responsible for the publishing of mine accident statistics.

Botha said while management and labour had opposing views on migrant labour and hostels, tripartite negotiations would be conducted into the issues.

"A way must be found which will enable our society to make changes in order to allow the workers to improve themselves by giving them the opportunity for a proper and better family life without stifling the industry."
Eleven miners injured as lift cage falls

ELEVEN miners were injured yesterday when their underground lift cage fell 50m down a shaft before being stopped by a host rope at the Freegold Sasolplaas No 4 shaft near Welkom (21/2).

Mine owner Anglo American Corporation spokesman James Duncan said the men, some of whom had fractures, had been admitted to hospital following the early morning incident.

"These people were rattled around quite a bit," said Duncan. The cause of the lift fall had not yet been established. The shaft and cage were not damaged and the lift was expected to be back in operation later in the day.

Duncan said the circumstances were "entirely different" from those in which 104 miners were killed on May 10 when an underground locomotive plunged down a mine shaft at Anglo American's Vaal Reefs mine near Orkney, crushing the lift cage.

Freegold is the world's biggest gold mine complex, employing 85 000 people in 26 operating shafts. — Reuter.
New mine safety rules approved by cabinet

MINISTER of Mineral and Energy Affairs P.J. Botha has announced the cabinet's approval of the Leon Commission recommendations on health and safety on the mines.

The announcement came only hours after 11 workers were injured in an accident similar to the Vaal Reefs Mine disaster last month in which 194 mineworkers were killed.

Calls for the approval of the commission's recommendations, which provide for wide-ranging health and safety laws in the industry, reached a crescendo after the Vaal Reefs disaster.

Mr Botha said cabinet had also endorsed a union call, made in submissions by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), to entrench the right to refuse to work in dangerous conditions.

One of the commission's most important recommendations was the drafting of a new Safety and Health in Mines Act.

The commission, which described the death rate in South African mines as unacceptably high, has also recommended that five safety and regulatory forums be set up.

Hours after cabinet approved the recommendations, Anglo American Corporation announced that 11 men were injured at the Sauspaas mine's number four shaft near Welkom yesterday.

The accident occurred when a cage taking about 50 mineworkers underground at 6:30 am stopped and then dropped about 50 metres before being arrested by its hoist rope.
11 miners injured as cage falls

JOHANNESBURG: Eleven mine employees were injured yesterday morning when a cage taking 50 workers underground stopped and then dropped 50m at Freegold's Saanplas No. 4 Shaft near Welkom. Anglo American Corporation said in a statement the 11 were admitted to hospital where they were in a satisfactory condition.

The accident occurred about 6.30am. The fall of the cage had been arrested by the hoist rope, company spokesman Mr James Duncan said. The cause of the accident is not yet known and there will be an official inquiry. CT 30.4.95.

The shaft and cage were not damaged and will be back in operation later in the day. — Sapa
Govt sets mining reforms in motion

CT (BR) 30/6/95 (212)

By Bruce Cameron

The government has approved sweeping reforms, including a major redraft of legislation, to improve safety and health standards in the mining industry.

At an extended Cabinet meeting on Wednesday night, the Leem commission report on mine safety and health standards was approved with instructions for immediate action.

Pik Botha, minister of mineral and energy affairs, said there was consensus “among all industry players that the current situation cannot be allowed to continue”.

Botha said there was general support for the recommendations of the commission.

The Cabinet endorsed several major recommendations including:

- The need for greater legislative intervention and restructuring;
- The establishment of tripartite bodies, representing the unions, the mine owners and the government, to review legislation and regulations;
- The introduction of appropriate systems for employee participation with enhanced worker rights and obligations;
- Improved training and human resources development, and
- The entrenchment in legislation of the right to refuse work in dangerous conditions.

The Cabinet also agreed to the creation or restructuring of five tripartite forums to administer and consider mine safety. They are:

- The Mine Health and Safety Council, which will advise the minister of mineral and energy affairs on all issues relating to mine health and safety, the relevant legislation and its enforcement;
- The Mining Regulating Advisory Committee, which will draft a new Safety and Health Mines Act;
- The Safety in Mines Research Advisory Committee, which will be restructured to give representation to employee organisations;
- A mining qualifications authority, which will set standards for the industry, and
- The Mining Occupational Health Advisory Committee, which will be restructured as a separate administrative agency within the department of mineral and energy affairs.

Recommendations to alter the grades of the inspectorate are being urgently investigated.

An investigation will also be conducted into South Africa’s controversial migrant labour and hostel system on the mines.

The Cabinet has endorsed a Leem commission recommendation that to establish a tripartite structure “to seek ways of improving the conditions of workers living on the mines, and to investigate the question of housing for mine-workers and their families.”
Miner safety measures approved

BY JUSTICE MAKALA
LABOUR REPORTER

Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs Pak Botha announced yesterday the Cabinet had approved the recommendations of the Leon Commission into health and safety on the mines.

The announcement came only hours after 11 workers were injured in a mine accident similar to the Vaal Reefs disaster in which 104 miners were killed last month.

Calls for the approval of the commission's recommendations, which will put in place wide-ranging and enforceable health and safety laws in the industry, reached a crescendo after the Vaal Reefs accident.

Botha said the Cabinet had also endorsed union calls, made in submissions to the commission by the National Union of Mineworkers, for the right to refuse to work in dangerous conditions to be entrenched.

One of the most important recommendations was the drafting of a new Safety and Health in Mines Act, and which the Cabinet had requested be drafted "with urgency."

The Commission, which described the death rate in South African mines as unacceptably high, has also recommended that five safety and regulatory forums be set up. These included a Mining Health and Safety Council which would serve as an advisory body to the Minister.

Hours after the Cabinet approved the recommendations, Anglo American Corporation announced that 11 men were injured at the Saul plaus mine near Welsom yesterday.

Anglo American said the accident occurred when a cage taking about 50 mineworkers underground at 6:30 a.m. stopped and then dropped about 50m before being arrested by its hoist rope.

Company spokesman James Duncan said the injured were in a satisfactory condition at the mine hospital. The cause of the accident was unknown.

NUM assistant general secretary Gwede Mantashe said the Saul plaus accident highlighted the need for training in the mining industry.

The union also reported that a mineworker had been killed in an accident at the Western Holdings mine.
Mine safety enters new era

Abdul Milazi
Labour Reporter

THE Cabinet has finally approved in principle the recommendations of the Leon Commission on health and safety on the mines released on March 30 this year.

It also approved in principle the recommendations set out in the report of the Parliamentary Mineral and Energy Portfolio Committee released earlier this month. The commission described the current death, injury and disease rate on South African mines as "unacceptably high".

The Ministry of Mineral and Energy Affairs said yesterday that submissions had been received from 17 bodies, including the Chamber of Mines, the National Union of Mineworkers and other mining trade unions, the Department of Labour and the Institute of Safety Management.

The Portfolio Committee, assisted by the Ministry of Mineral and Energy Affairs, found that there was a general consensus among parties concerned that there was a need for legislative intervention and restructuring of the current legal framework on SA mines.

It was also realised that there is a need for the establishment of representative tripartite bodies to review legislation and regulations and the introduction of appropriate systems for employee participation with enhanced basic worker rights and obligations. The structures designed to implement the commission's major recommendations have now been approved by the Portfolio Committee and the Cabinet.
A look at mine safety

Following many years in which workers were killed in South African mines, Cabinet has in principle approved a commission of inquiries' recommendation on safety, writes Abdul Nilazi, Labour Reporter.

For many years, South African mines were the country's killing fields for black workers. As victims of the cheap migrant labour system, their safety was ignored.

However, according to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Affairs, this is about to change. Last week the Cabinet in principle approved the Leon Commission's recommendations on health and safety on mines.

Ministry spokesman Mr Roland Darrol says South Africa could have a new Safety and Health in Mines Act before the end of the year.

This is long overdue. It has been estimated that about 69,000 miners were killed in local mines between 1941 and 1994 with more than one million injured.

The Mas 10 Vaal Reefs Mine disaster in which 104 miners were killed in the work of the Leon Commission of Inquiry into Safety and Health in Mines urged.

The commission appointed last year called for a new mine safety law to be drafted by workers, management and Government - a right for which unions have long been campaigning. The commission stated the statistics of mine accidents in South Africa over the past years as being much to be desired.

Mine accidents

According to the Energy Affairs Ministry, 485 people were killed in mine accidents in 1994 and 586 in 1993, most of them in gold mines (372 in 1994 and 426 in 1993).

The commission recommended the immediate drafting of a new Safety and Health in Mines Act by a Mining Regulation Advisory Committee (MRAC). At the request of Mr Pik Botha, the Government mining engineer has already established the MRAC, which had its first meeting on May 30.

During the meeting, the MRAC identified key issues which needed immediate action. These were the appointment of representatives for a tripartite committee to draft the new Safety and Health in Mines Act and the immediate investigation of issues raised by the Leon Commission. It was further resolved that task groups be established to investigate ground falls, haulage and transport accidents underground, occupational health and coal mine explosions.

The MRAC is also currently amending the terms of reference of the Safety in Mines Research Committee (Simrac) to include employee organisations, which previously did not enjoy representation. A special Simrac meeting will be held on Thursday July 6 to rectify its new terms of reference.

Evidence submitted to the Leon Commission, Darrol said the Government's mining engineer informed the commission about the initiative to establish a tripartite Mining Qualifications Authority. The commission recommended that a restructured Mine Health and Safety Inspectorate (MHIS) be a separate administrative agency within the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, and be separate from the Regional Organisation set up by the Minerals Act of 1991.

In response to the commission's recommendations on mining accident statistics, the Government Mining Engineer has already formed a Mining Publications and Statistics Committee to deal with the publication of accident statistics. The first volume of this publication was released early this month and contains statistics on accidents reported from January 1984 to December 1994.

Darrol says although the Chamber of Mines and the National Union of Mineworkers have opposing views on the issue of migrant labour and hostels, they both agreed that the issue be jointly tackled by workers, employers and the Government. "The structures designed to implement the commission's recommendations have now been approved by the Portfolio Committee and the Cabinet," says Darrol.

"The Minister (Botha) is convinced that the envisaged changes will result in substantial improvements in safety and health in South African mines." A Mine Health and Safety Council (MHSC) will be established by the new Act to advise the Minister through the Government mining engineer on all matters relating to health and safety in mines, the relevant legislation and how it can be enforced.

Standing committees

Darrol says the MHSC will consist of four representatives of employers, four of workers who do not hold managerial positions, one from mine management, three from the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, and the Government mining engineer as chairman.

The MHSC will have standing committees and sub-committees for specific purposes, and be empowered to appoint ad hoc committees to investigate or administer the relevant business of the MHSC. "The composition of the committees will be a reflection of the council, with emphasis on the expertise of members in relation to the subject matter of the committees," say Darrol.

Another mine disaster families of miners killed during the recent Vaal reef mine tragedy

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Fatal mine fire
now sealed off

FOURTEEN proto teams were yesterday busy sealing off the underground fire that caused the death of six miners at St Helena Gold Mine in Welkom in the Free State on Saturday.

The eight survivors of the 14-man team, who were in the area of the fire, were still in the mine hospital yesterday morning. All were due to be discharged later yesterday after being kept for 24 hours for observation.

Mine general manager Mr Mike Fischer said all production at the mine, which has three operating shafts, had been halted.

Conditions underground

Mining will only resume once it is known that conditions underground are safe and that smoke has not spread to the other shafts.

The accident occurred in the mine's No 2 shaft some 1 600 metres below surface.

Fischer said the man who died had not been burnt, but had apparently been overcome by dense smoke. It was too early to speculate on the cause of the fire, which was gaseous in nature.

One survivor, Mr Crosby Matimba (31), recounted to journalists what had occurred in the 45-minute drama.

He and his team leader, who had been conducting operations using a transvac system — sweeping up small particles of ore — had detected a smell of smoke. “At first we thought it was fumes from explosives.”

“Blinded by smoke”

The team leader went to the bottom of the shaft to switch off the transvac system. Matimba said the smoke then started to become denser and he made his way up to the station.

“I was blinded by the smoke and could not find my way. So I crawled along the railway track in the haselage.”

From the station he and another miner attempted to go back down to the area where two team leaders were stranded near the fire.

“But the smoke was too thick. We had to turn back,” he said.

Subsequently, four other men who had reached the station returned into the smoke to try and rescue the two others below.

“They never came back,” Matimba said.

— Sapa.
Six miners die in underground fire

By ANDREW TRENCH

SIX miners — including three who made a heroic dash through dense smoke to warn their colleagues — died in an underground fire at Gengold's St Helena goldmine near Welkom in the Free State yesterday afternoon.

Another eight miners who came through the smoke were taken to St Helena's mine hospital for observation. Mine management said all underground personnel had been accounted for and they did not expect more deaths.

The names of the dead are being withheld until their families have been notified.

Andrew Davidson, Gengold's spokesman, said about nine men had been returning from their shift at about 5pm when they noticed smoke about 1 kilometre below the surface in No 2 shaft.

He said six of the group realised that three of their colleagues were still coming up and rushed back through the smoke to warn them.

Three did not return and died with the three miners they had tried to warn. The other three were able to make it to the surface.

As their colleagues ran back down the shaft to sound the alarm, the other miners telephoned personnel above ground to warn of the fire below.

Mr Davidson said it did not appear that the men had died by burning, although he was reluctant to speculate on the cause of their deaths. He said all the bodies had been recovered.

He said there would be a full investigation by St Helena mine management and an inquiry by the government mining engineers' department.

The shaft stewards committee and the National Union of Mineworkers had been informed of the disaster and had been on hand, offering help with the rescue operation, Mr Davidson said.

By last night the cause of the fire was unknown and Mr Davidson was unwilling to speculate.

He said a mine fire-fighting team was still trying to pinpoint exactly where the fire was, adding that no flames were visible, only smoke.

Gengold said later that mine rescue teams were fighting the fire.

It was unclear over how large an area the fire may be spread.
Six miners killed

SIX mineworkers died in an underground fire yesterday at the St Helena Gold Mine, near Welkom in the Free State, the mine owners Gengold said in a statement.

The accident occurred about 1600 metres below surface in the number two shaft between 1 pm and 2 pm as the men were making their way out of the mine at the end of their shift. Six bodies were recovered last night. – Sapa
**Mining engineer investigates fire**

Renee Grawitzky (212)

GOVERNMENT mining engineer Dick Bakker noted management and National Union of Mineworkers representatives at Gengold’s St Helena mine yesterday at the start of an investigation of Saturday’s fire, in which six miners died.

Gengold spokesman Andrew Davidson said four proto teams had gone underground yesterday to seal off the fire. The smoke was being drawn out through a ventilation shaft.

The names of the dead would be released only once their families had been notified. Production would resume once the fire had been sealed off.

"Lost production will only be quantified at a later stage. The mine is more concerned with the loss of human life at present," he said.

Fourteen people were walking up an incline after their shift when they came into contact with smoke from a fire in an unused stop 1,600m below the surface, Davidson said.

Most ran through the smoke and made it to the station, where they alerted others to the fire. Six men, realising three of their colleagues had not come up the incline, went back through the smoke to warn them.

Four of the six died, as did two other.

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**Fire investigation**

Continued from Page 1

Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha said the heroism and selflessness of the miners who ran back through the smoke "served as an inspiring example to us all."

He appealed to the mining industry to put into effect the recommendations of the Leon inquiry into mine safety before legislation was passed.

Miners. Eight men were admitted to hospital. All were from Lesotho and Eastern Cape, Davidson said.

The last major mining accident at St Helena was in 1987, when 83 people died in a methane explosion.
By Shirley Woodgate

The “heroism and the selflessness” of the four St Helena miners who died when they risked running back through the smoke to warn fellow workers has been praised by the Minister Pik Botha as “an inspiring example to us all.”

Six miners were killed on Saturday by a fire more than 2km beneath the surface, four of them attempting to rescue two colleagues trapped behind dense smoke at the Gengold mine near Welkom in the Free State.

The four men ran back in a vain bid to warn fellow miners further down an incline at the pit’s Number Two shaft, but the rescuers and the two men they tried to save, were overcome as they tried to get back above the smoke wall.

Botha called on the Chamber of Mines and mine management to apply the recommendations of the Leon Commission on mine safety, without waiting for legislation to be enacted. He said.

To Page 3
'HEROISM AND SELFLESSNESS' HAILED

Miners die in bid to rescue colleagues

JOHANNESBURG: Six miners died after being overcome by smoke from an underground fire at Gencor's St Helena gold mine near Welkom yesterday.

Four miners were killed in a fire 1,6km underground at the St Helena gold mine near Welkom yesterday, in a failed bid to rescue two colleagues trapped behind a curtain of smoke.

Six miners died in the incident, the four after going back through thick smoke to warn their two colleagues further down an incline at the mine's No 2 shaft. All six were overcome as they tried to get back above the smoke wall by early evening the fire at the Gencor mine had been isolated.

"The heroism and the selflessness of the miners who ran back to warn their fellow workers serves as an inspiring example to us all," Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Mr Pik Botha said.

Mr Crosby Matumba, one of eight survivors of his team of 14, said his team leader went to the bottom of the shaft to switch off equipment they were using after they detected a smell of smoke.

After crawling to safety along a railway track, blinded by dense smoke, Mr Matumba and two others tried to go back to look for the team leader and another man.

But the smoke forced them to turn back. "I saw that my strength was at an end," Mr Matumba said.

Subsequently, four other men returned into the smoke. "They never came back," he said.

The names of the dead will not be released until their next of kin have been informed. — Sapa-Reuters

See Business Report, Page 7
Honours for mine heroes

Blaze isolated, but still burning in Welkom mine

The Argus Correspondent

Johannesburg — The four heroes of the St. Helena mine blaze who gave their lives to warn colleagues trapped behind thick smoke underground, will be posthumously honoured by the Gengold mines.

They were praised by Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pk. Botha for their “heroism and selflessness.”

Mine spokesman Andrew Davidson said their action highlighted the very special breed of people in mining and the bond linking them.

“The men involved were four black miners in lowly positions and their tragic sacrifice typifies the spirit that exists in South Africa’s close-knit mining fraternity,” he said.

Six miners were killed by the fire more than two kilometres beneath the surface of the Free State mine, four of them attempting to rescue two colleagues trapped behind thick smoke at the Gengold mine near Welkom in the Free State.

The four men ran back in a bid to warn miners further down an incline, but the rescuers and the two men they tried to save were overcome.

Although the blaze had been isolated, the fire was still burning today, three days after the accident.

General manager Mike Fischer said production at the No. 9 shaft would not resume until all traces of smoke and gas had been eliminated.

The fire had originated in a disused dip about 1,800 m underground, and four firefighting teams sealed off the blaze site in the shaft, which produced high-grade ore.

In the first three months of this year, the St. Helena mine produced 1,499 kg of gold, making it the fifth largest producer of Gengold’s 10 mines.

The accident is the latest to hit South African mines.

On May 10, 104 miners were killed when an underground locomotive plunged down Anglo American’s Vaal Reefs gold mine, crushing the lift cage carrying men to their night shift.

Beetlemania: It took Quinton Drury of Tableview two years to knock, spit and polish his “bug” into this gleaming shape. He was one of the entrants at the VW Bugfest at Maynardville in Wynberg at the weekend.
Pik urges immediate action on mine safety proposals

PRETORIA — Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha has appealed to the Chamber of Mines and mine managements to apply the recommendations of the Leon Commission on mine safety without waiting for the new legislation to be enacted.

Mr Botha's appeal comes in the wake of the fire accident at St Helena gold mine near the Free State town of Welkom on Saturday in which six miners lost their lives.

Mr Botha said he had again instructed the government mining engineer and his staff not to wait for the new structures to be in place, nor for the new Mine Safety and Health Act to become law, before applying the Leon Commission's recommendations.

He expressed his condolences to the families and friends of those who died in the accident.

"I am only too aware of the tragic human consequences of disasters of this kind."

He expressed admiration for the "heroism and selflessness" of three miners who ran back through the smoke to warn their fellow workers they were in danger. Their action "serves as an inspiring example to us all."

Mr Botha said the government was doing "its utmost to bring the new mine safety structures into place with the greatest urgency."

"We are striving to meet the risks inherent in mining with the most effective safety measures that are humanly possible."

Last Wednesday the cabinet had approved the salient features of the recommendations of the Leon Commission.

"This decision placed the stamp of approval on steps which the department of mineral and energy affairs, the government mining engineer and I took in anticipation of that decision."

"It also opened the way for putting additional recommendations into place. Swift implementation of the recommendations is essential to save human lives and prevent injury."

Mr Botha said he had specifically requested all structures reconstituted or set up by the Leon Commission — the Mine Health and Safety Council, the Mine Regulating Advisory Committee, the Safety in Mines Advisory Research Committee, the Mining Qualifications Authority, and the Mining Occupational Health Advisory Committee — to give their work and responsibilities the highest priority.

"They are not to rest until the commission's recommendations are being fully implemented in every mine in the country."

Mr Botha added that urgent attention was being given to the restructuring of the mine health and safety inspectorate.

The tripartite principle, whereby government, labour and management were together involved in every aspect of mine safety, was being increasingly applied, he said — Sapa.
JOHannesburg: The Helen gold mines, where six miners died in a fire, was to resume partial production yesterday afternoon as firefighters contained the underground blaze and channelled smoke and fumes to the surface.

However, Mr. Andrew Davidson, spokesman for Gengold, said although the all-clear had been given for the Number Four shaft, the emphasis was on safety. — Reuter
Killer mine fire sealed off

BY BOBBY BROWN

The fire in a disused shaft at the St Helena goldmine, near Welkom, which killed six miners on Saturday, has been brought under control and sealed off, the mine's owners, Gengold, said yesterday.

They also released the names of the six men, four of whom died when they went back through a blanket of smoke to rescue two team leaders.

The six workers were Lemmy Chalilone (53), a panel operator from Umuta in Transkei, Ramole Molele (37), a hoist driver from Quthing in Lesotho, Pitso Sethobana (42), a panel operator from Mohaleshoek in Lesotho, Mosekwe Ngcobo (62), also a panel operator from Tsolo in Transkei and the two team leaders Mohanoe Mochesana (45) and Samuel Mkwanezi (53) from Maseru, Lesotho and Whiteshoek, Owa-Owa respectively.

Gengold spokesman Andrew Davidson said funeral services for the men would be held individually by their families in their home towns.

"We are discussing the possibility of a memorial service with the National Union of Mineworkers," Davidson said.

The fire started at the end of a 14-man shift at about 1 pm in a disused section of Level 25.

The four men, who had already surfaced, went back down Level 24 to an incline shaft which connects with Level 25.

The six bodies were found by rescue workers later that day.

"St Helena's general manager, Mike Fischer, said he was unable to speculate as to the cause of the fire, but added that it was gaseous in nature."

"Both the mine and a government engineer will be conducting a full investigation," he said.
Killer fire at mine sealed off

JOHANNESBURG.—The fire in a shaft at the St Helena gold-mine, near Welkom, which killed six miners on Saturday, has been brought under control and sealed off, the mine's owners said.

Gengold, in a statement yesterday, released the names of the six men, four of whom died when they returned through a blanket of smoke to rescue two team leaders trapped by the fire.

The six workers were Lennox Chalitone, 35, a panel operator from Umtata in Transkei, Ramole Masilo, 37, a hoist driver from Quthing in Lesotho, Pitso Sethobane, 42, a panel operator from Mohaleshoek in Lesotho, Mapondwemi Ngolde, 42, also a panel operator from Tsolo in Transkei and the two team leaders Mohano Mochesana, 45, and Samuel Mkwanzo, 53, from Maseru in Lesotho and Witseshoek in QwaQwa respectively.

The fire, said to have been "gasous", began in a disused section of level 25. The four men, going off duty, had already surfaced but returned down level 24 to an incline shaft which connects with level 25.
Gold mine fire 'under control'

WELKOM The fire at the St Helena gold mine here in the Free State which claimed six lives on Saturday is under control but had not been extinguished by yesterday, officials said.

The mine's management said the area where the fire was burning had been sealed off and declared a no-go area to all personnel as it was unsafe.

The fire, started by the ignition of gas and which set underground wooden props alight, will be left to burn itself out.

Sapa
Mine denies NUM claim

Renée Grewitzky

THE National Union of Mineworkers claimed yesterday that Vaal Reefs' management had agreed to grant financial assistance to the families of contract workers who died in the Vaal Reefs disaster.

But Anglo American spokesman James Duncan said management had not agreed to make a payment to the families of the ten contract workers who died. On May 10 a locomotive plunged down No 2 shaft at Vaal Reefs and crashed into a cage carrying 184 workers, killing them all.

An NUM spokesperson said contract workers were disadvantaged because they were not covered by the same benefits as other workers and management's decision was an acknowledgement of this.

The union and management had submitted a joint written appeal to the trustees of the Vaal Reefs Disaster Fund on Wednesday to grant payments "commensurate with those made to other employees who died". NUM said the families of contract workers were entitled to a small benefit from the Workmen's Compensation Fund, but were not covered by the Mines Association Benefit Scheme. Vaal Reefs employees would receive an average payout of R5 694 as opposed to R4 000-R6 000 for contract workers.
NUM demands compensation for those injured in past

BY ROSS HERBERT

Citing grossly inequitable laws in the past, the National Union of Mineworkers has called for a system to be established to provide for additional compensation for workers injured in past mine accidents or afflicted with occupational diseases.

Helen Masoli, compensation officer for NUM, said the union had begun discussions with the Compensation Commissioner and the Government over the possibility of creating a fund to give additional compensation to miners and other workers disabled in the past. Before 1977, disabled black miners were given lump payments which the union considers "grossly unfair." After 1977, miners disabled 30% or less received lump payments while those more disabled received pensions.

"I have a worker who came here last week who had a leg amputated in 1978 and is earning only R150 a month. The law of the day wasn't at all fair. Can you really live and survive out of that?" Masoli said.

Theoretically disability pensions were to be increased to keep pace with inflation, but have fallen far behind.

According to research by the Centre for Applied Legal Studies, the value of injury pensions awarded in 1982 had by 1992 only 37% of its original purchasing power.

"Clearly there are thousands of miners in desperate condition. There are thousands and thousands of mineworkers just dumped in rural areas with very little support, including paraplegics and quadriplegics," said Marcel Golding, chairman of the parliamentary committee on mineral and energy affairs. He said there was broad political support for aiding past disability victims.
Anglo mine revamp could threaten jobs

BY DEREK TOMMAYE
MINING EDITOR

A major restructuring, which could lead to significant job losses, is to take place at the gold mines in the Anglo American group.

However, the only tangible development so far is the decision to halt the sinking of the second phase of Freegold No 4 shaft at the giant Freegold mine in the Free State.

The move follows extremely disappointing results from June quarter operations, which included a loss after capital expenditure from Freegold.

Available profit from Anglo's mines dropped 36.6 percent from R137.6 million in the March quarter to R87.3 million.

This drop in earnings is reflected in the sharply lower interim dividend declarations from the three Transvaal gold mines.

Western Deep is paying 120c a share, down 56 percent from last year's 275c, Vaal Reefs is paying 40c, down 44 percent from last year's 72c, and Eland's, and is paying 30c, down 25 percent from last year's 40c.

No figures have been given for possible job losses. But Ken Dicks, a senior official, warned a few weeks ago that at Freegold, which employs 78,000 and operates at a profit on only two days a month, 11 shafts employing 32,000 people were at risk.

However, at a press briefing in Johannesburg yesterday, he expressed the hope that the mines had reached the bottom of the trough and that from now onward production would improve.

The small number of public holidays in the September quarter would help, he said. He believed that once the wage negotiations were concluded, the workforce would settle down and this would lead to an improvement in the whole situation.

Clem Sunter, the chairman of Anglo American's gold division, was not optimistic about prospects for a higher gold price.

He said the price was in a tight range and the industry would have to get used to the idea that it could remain between R45 000 and R48 000 a kilogram for some time to come.

Group gold production amounted to 55 487kg compared with 56 998kg in the March quarter.

Average revenue was 3.4 percent higher at R45 187 a kilogram, up from R43 703 a kilogram in March.

Total working costs were lower at R2,103 billion (R2,108 billion) while average unit costs were 5.6 percent higher at R30 315 (R37 241).
Anglo mine revamp could threaten jobs

BY DEREK TOMMEEY

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Clem Sunter, the chairman of Anglo America's gold division, was not optimistic about prospects for a higher gold price.

He said the price was in a tight range and the industry would have to get used to the idea that it could remain between R45,000 and R46,000 a kilogram for some time to come.

Group gold production amounted to 53,487kg, compared with 56,596kg in the March quarter. Average revenue was 3.4 percent higher at R45,197 a kilogram, up from R43,703 a kilogram in March.

Total working costs were lower at R2,103 billion (R2,108 billion) while average unit costs were 5.6 percent lower at R39,315 (R39,211).
Four miners killed in two accidents

FOUR miners were killed yesterday in two accidents on gold mines east of Johannesburg, three of them in a rock fall at East Rand Proprietary Mines' Her cules secondary shaft, mine officials said.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said the three miners were trapped during the rock fall at the Boksburg mine at about 2am while marking areas to put in supports. Another miner suffered serious injuries.

Another miner was killed when an underground lift cage derailed at JC Gold Mining's Waverley shaft, formerly the Primrose gold mine, in Germiston. "Two miners were thrown out and one miner died when he broke his neck," rescue official Simon Barkhuzen said. The other miner suffered lacerations.

Mine manager John Cockcroft said the accident was the first at the mine in a year.

"We have a very proud mine safety record — we haven't had an accident on the mine for a year now. There will definitely be a full inquiry into what has happened here."

NUM Gauteng health and safety officer Charles Freenland urged mine owners to work with the union and miners to improve safety. "It is seriously distressing to have two separate shaft accidents in one day. Accidents like these will continue while management refuses to allow workers to be involved in safety on the mines."

Mining companies say more than 60,000 miners have been killed and more than 1-million injured in SA's mines between 1911 and 1994. — Reuters.

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Lift cage and rockfall blamed

Four die in mining accidents

LABOUR REPORTER and REUTERS

Four miners were killed in two separate mining accidents yesterday, sparking renewed calls for worker involvement in mine safety issues.

In the first accident, three miners died and another was seriously injured in a rockfall at the East Rand Proprietary Mine's (ERPM) Hercules secondary shaft at about 2 am, the Boksburg-based company said in a statement.

National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) spokesman Judith Weymont said the four miners, who were marking up the roof of a shaft to install supports, were trapped when the shaft roof fell in.

The injured miner was rescued in the morning, but those who died were only dug out later in the day, the union said.

In the second accident, one miner was killed and another injured when an underground lift cage derailed at the privately owned J C Gold Mining Company near Germiston, east of Johannesburg.

"A shaft cage derailed and then overturned. Two miners were thrown out and one miner died when he broke his neck. The other one had only lacerations," said Germiston chief fire officer Simon Barkhuizen.

NUM health and safety officer

for Gauteng, Charles Freeland, said it was distressing to have two shaft accidents in one day.

"Accidents like these will continue while managements refuse to allow workers to be involved in safety in the mines," he said.

He said the union had been demanding better health and safety in mines and the appointment of full-time safety stewards, but mining houses had refused to accept this demand. The issue is one of several that the union has deadlocked on with employers during this year's wage negotiations.

"When will management start putting the lives of workers before profits," Freeland asked.

JC mine manager John Cockcroft and the accident was the first at the Waverley shaft since May, when JC Gold Mining Company took it over from Primrose Gold Mines Ltd.

"This is the first death we have had since we've taken over. We have a very proud mine safety record. We haven't had an accident on the mine for a year now. We always try to avoid all accidents not just the fatalities," said Cockcroft.

He said an inquiry into the accident would begin as soon as possible.

Both mining companies said the dead miners' names would be released after their families had been informed.
Miner dies as shaft cage derails

JOHANNESBURG One miner was killed and another injured when an underground lift cage derailed at the privately owned J C Gold Mining Company east of here yesterday.

"A shaft cage derailed and then overturned. Two miners were thrown out and one miner died when he broke his neck. The other one had only lacerations," Germiston's chief fire officer Mr Simon Barkhuizen said.

The accident had happened at the company's Waverley shaft. No other miners had been injured.

Mine manager Mr John Cockcroft said the accident was the first at the Waverley shaft since the company took it over from Primrose Gold Mines.

"We have a very proud mine safety record and try to avoid all accidents, not just the fatal. There will be a full inquiry into what has happened here," he said.

Three miners died in a rockfall at East Rand Proprietary Mine's Hercules secondary shaft early yesterday morning — Sapa-Reuters
Fourth miner dies

A FOURTH miner died from injuries yesterday as a result of a rockfall at East Rand Proprietary Mine in Boksburg on Monday. Three miners were dead when they were dug out. (212) 80 26 7195
Mine deaths bring SA toll to 557

(212) 610-2881 95

LABOUR REPORTER

Two mineworkers were killed in a rockfall at First Weegold mine on the West Rand yesterday, bringing the total number of mineworkers who have died at South African mines this year to 557.

No workers were injured in the rockfall, a mine spokesman said.

The Weegold workers died about 450m underground during cleaning operations in the mine's Turk shaft.

Seven mineworkers have died this week alone in accidents at South African mines.

Five mineworkers died in two separate accidents on Monday. In the first incident, four mineworkers died, and another was seriously injured, in a rockfall at the East Rand Proprietary Mine.

In the second incident, a miner was killed and another injured when an underground lift cage derailed at the J C Gold Mining Company near Germiston on the East Rand.

The names of those who died yesterday have not yet been released.
Vaal Reefs inquest to start with Leon at helm

Renee Grawitsky
BD 31/7/95

AN INQUEST inquiry into the Vaal Reefs mining disaster starts tomorrow — close to three months after 104 mineworkers died when a loco above crashed down the No 2 shaft and trapped 36 in a cage carrying workers underground.

The joint inquest-inquiry, as held following the Mmantsi drift disaster, will be chaired by Judge Ramon Leon, assisted by assessors Arnold McKenzie from the mineral and energy affairs department and May Hermanus, safety manager for Smanaco. The inquest-inquiry, which could continue well into next year, will be followed by a commission of inquiry headed by Leon and the same two assessors.

The inquest-inquiry will determine what happened at Vaal Reefs and could recommend prosecution. The commission of inquiry will investigate ways to prevent similar incidents from occurring and to minimise the risk of such occurrences.

Recommendations made by Leon in the commission of inquiry into safety and health in the mining industry included the drafting of a new Act — the Health and Safety in Mines Act.

In terms of the Leon recommendations, the establishment of a trapezoidal and voluntary Mining Regulating Advisory Committee would oversee the drafting of new legislation. Minister Pak Botha appointed a team comprising representation from labour (Paul Benjamin, Neal White and Marnie Mulder), government (Terence Doyle and Les Kegel) and business (Lette LaGrange and Johan Greff) to draft the legislation.

In June, Cabinet approved the mineral and energy portfolio committee recommendations that the drafting team use the Mine Health, Safety and Environment Act 1995 as the foundation for drafting new legislation. It had been presented by Paul Benjamin on behalf of NUM during the Leon commission hearings. The drafting committee would also consider relevant international labour organisation (ILO) recommendations and conventions, the Occupational Health and Safety Act and other relevant international mining legislation when drafting the new legislation.

The 82nd session of the ILO conference in Geneva in June had adopted a convention and recommendation to “improve safety and health conditions for the 25-million workers directly employed in mining, one of the world’s most hazardous occupations.”

Member states who ratified the convention would be required to consult employers and employees “in order to formulate, carry out and periodically review a coherent policy on safety and health in mines and develop provisions in national laws and regulations to ensure implementation.” They had to ensure supervision and inspection of mines, and report and investigate accidents and diseases.

Member states also had to ensure employers took measures to eliminate and minimise risks to safety and health in mines, and workers would be required to report accidents and hazards to employers. They would have the right not to work in an area which could be dangerous, and provision was made for the election of safety and health representatives.
Mine safety 'needs attention'  

THE mining industry, with its unacceptably high fatality rate, should enact the Leon commission recommendations immediately without waiting for new health and safety legislation, Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Piki Botha said.

In his keynote address to the Southern African Miners' Federation (SAMP) in Broederstroom yesterday Botha said, "If one life is saved, it is worth it.

"Of 19 countries listed in an International Labour Organisation (ILO) table summarising fatal mining accidents per year, 13 have better safety records than SA, with Zimbabwe coming close to SA’s rates.

"Each ton of gold produced in SA costs an average of more or less one human life and 12 seriously injured miners.

The mining industry was a major contributor to national economies in the region and mineral exports in SA contributed 6% of forex earnings.

He said because of mining's importance, "it is in both management and labour's interests that you strive for a management/worker partnership rather than being antagonistic."

NUM president and president of the federation James Motlati said, "We are concerned about rebuilding our economies, but that is not our job. Our job is to protect the diverse interests of mineworkers. For me this means primarily raising the standards of health and safety, and abolishing the migrant labour system as it operates in southern Africa."

Motlati said the adoption of the Safety and Health Convention by the ILO in June was "a major victory for mineworkers across the globe. The challenge is for each affiliate to persuade its government to ratify this important convention."

Miners' International Federation (MIP) general secretary Peter Muchalzak said the increased international unity among mineworkers had made it possible "to impose our will on governments and employers to get the convention adopted."

Muchalzak said despite changes in the international arena, the labour movement had to be changed and adapted to the same extent. He called for greater unity between unions operating in the mining, energy and chemical industries.

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Fax: 041-2333.
Each ton of
gold costs 1
life - Pik
Breederstorm - The human
costs in South Africa's mining in-
dustry were unacceptably high,
with a death and 12 serious in-
jures for almost every ton of
gold produced. Mineral and En-
ergy Minister Pik Botha said
yesterday.

"This is unacceptably high by
any standards, and internation-
ally we compare badly," he told
a congress of the Southern Afri-
can Miners' Federation.

International Labour Organis-
ation figures for mine deaths in
19 countries showed 13 of them
had better safety records than
South Africa's, Botha said. Last
year 485 people were killed in
accidents on our mines.

SAMP president James Mot-
latsa said in a speech to the con-
gress that, on average, at least
one person was killed at South
African mines each day.

"The only conclusion I can
draw from it is that black mine-
workers are subsidising mining
production with their lives. There
is no technical reason why mining should not be abso-
lutely safe. The only obstacle
is finance. We must insist that
this butchery must stop or else
production must stop," Motlatsa
said. - Reuters
Human cost of gold a death for every ton

BROEDERSTROOM — The human costs of South Africa’s mining industry were unacceptably high. Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha said:

"Each ton of gold produced in South Africa costs on average the death of one miner and the serious injury of 12 others. This is unacceptably high by any standards, and internationally, we compare badly," Mr Botha told a congress of the Southern Africa Miners’ Federation (SAMF) yesterday.

The federation claims membership of 1.5 million workers across the region’s mining, quarrying and energy sectors.

Mr Botha said International Labour Organisation (ILO) figures on deaths in mining in 19 countries showed 13 of them had better safety records than South Africa.

More than 60,000 miners died and more than a million were injured in South Africa’s mining industry between 1911 and 1994. Last year 485 people were killed in mine accidents.

The industry had a “grim setback” with the death of 104 miners in May, when an underground locomotive plunged down a shaft at Anglo American’s Vaal Reefs gold mine southwest of Johannesburg, crushing the lift cage carrying the men to their night shift.

SAMF president James Motlatsi told the congress that on average at least one person was killed on South Africa’s mines each day.

"The only conclusion I can draw from it is that black mineworkers are subsidising mining production with their lives. There is no technical reason why mining should not be safe. The only obstacle is finance. We must insist that this butchery stops or else production must stop," Mr Motlatsi said.

Mr Botha said that in spite of the Vaal Reefs setback, South Africa had made progress, with the publication of the findings of the Leon Commission of Inquiry into safety and health in mines — the first inquiry of its kind on the local mining industry in more than 30 years.

Judge Ramon Leon recommended in his report that the government, employers and labour set up a committee to draft new laws to govern the mining industry.

Mr Botha said this joint approach held the promise of establishing a policy acceptable to all.

"Although South Africa will remain a major gold producer until well into the next century, output will slide owing to falling grades and the depths of the remaining ore reserves. This will impact on the whole southern African region. It is of decisive importance that the region as a whole should reach and display unanimity on minerals and mining policy."

South Africa had to ensure it did not drop behind other countries in mining technology, particularly considering the fall in gold mining.

"The South African gold mining industry is past its peak and gold production is falling. Ore rendered uneconomic through lack of productivity will be lost in the ground," he told delegates.

The output from South African gold mines, which dominated the industry, fell 35 tons last year to 584 tons — the lowest level since 1958. Mine owners had said that production and profitability remained under threat from labour disruptions, a cost squeeze and a rise in the number of public holidays. — Reuters
Mine health, safety shake-up urged

The 120 delegates were drawn from Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The federation condemned the Swazi government for the recent spate of labour troubles and alleged violation of labour rights there.

It resolved to resist the setting up of export processing zones, saying that where they existed, workers were not allowed to form or belong to trade unions.

Palane said the setting up of these zones was not only anti-union but unconstitutional as it violated the guarantee of freedom of association.

The unions urged the development of an overall policy of beneficiation of minerals mined in the region instead of these being taken elsewhere.
Vaal Reefs legal probe starts

A joint inquest/judicial inquiry starts today into the causes of the Vaal Reefs mining disaster near Orkney in which 104 men were killed when a runaway locomotive plunged 500m down a shaft on to their underground lift.

The hearing, headed by Mr Justice Ramon Leon, was due to start in Johannesburg at 10am with testimony by the mine’s safety manager, R.C. “Tubby” Proudfoot, and Mineral and Energy Affairs chief regional mine engineer W.J. Kekemoer.

The probe comes after Government approval in June for sweeping reforms. Leon will be assisted by assessors Arnold McKenzie from the Mineral and Energy Affairs Development and Semanoc Ltd. safety manager Max Hermanus and Advocate Riegal du Toit from the Pretoria Attorney-General’s office will lead evidence.

The inquiry is expected to visit the scene of the underground accident on Thursday. Kekemoer said:

Also on Thursday, Welfare and Population Development Minister Abe Williams will present James Motlatsi, chairman of the Vaal Reefs Disaster Fund, with a cheque for R5 million from the Disaster Relief Fund for the dependants of the miners workers.

A formal commission of inquiry assigned to make recommendations on mine safety to prevent a recurrence of the disaster will follow the inquiry.
Vaal tragedy probe begins
Inquiry will only know next year if the miners died from negligence

By Abdul Milazi
Labour Reporter

The Ministry of Mineral and Energy Affairs says the inquiry into the Vaal Reefs mine disaster on May 10, which begins today, is not only about finding out who was wrong, but to prevent similar accidents in future.

The accident claimed the lives of 104 workers when a runaway locomotive and carriage plunged down a shaft on to the lift they were in.

Mineral and Energy Affairs spokesman Mr Roland Darrol said the recommendations of the Leon Commission of Inquiry into health and safety on the mines has already been implemented ahead of the Health and Safety in Mines Bill becoming law.

One of the Leon Commission’s recommendations was that a health and safety in mines act be formulated and that a voluntary tripartite mining advisory committee should oversee the drafting of the Bill.

Darrol said Minister Pak Botha had set the wheels in motion two weeks after the accident when he appointed a team, comprising the union, management and government representatives to draft the legislation. The team used the Mines, Health Safety and Environment Act of 1995 as the basis for the new Bill.

Darrol said if the inquiry finds proof of criminal negligence against mine management, the Department of Justice will take appropriate action.

The inquiry is chaired by Mr Justice Ramon Leon, who headed the Leon Commission of Inquiry into Health and Safety on the Mines. He will be assisted by Mineral and Affairs representative Mr Arnold McKenzie and Ms May Hermanus.

The fact-finding inquiry is expected to continue till late next year after which a full-blown commission will be appointed.
The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — The movements of the locomotive that plunged down a Vaal Reefs Mine shaft in May, crushing 104 men to death in one of South Africa’s worst mining accidents, will be the main focus of the inquiry into the accident.

In his opening address to the inquiry yesterday, counsel for mine-owners Anglo American, Chris Loxton, SC, said the movements, condition and functioning of the locomotive on the day of the accident would be matters which would be important to the inquiry.

The inquiry, chaired by Judge Ramon Leon, is being held in Johannesburg and is expected to deliberate until well into next year. Its brief is to establish the cause of the accident and who, on available evidence, responsible for it. It may recommend prosecution of those found responsible.

Vaal Reefs health and safety co-ordinator, Robert Proudfoot, described his role at the mine and explained technical terms which would be used in later evidence. He also testified about the structure of the mine, the circumstances surrounding mining operations and the duties of various employees on a mine.

“There is evidence that, at Vaal Reefs Mine, more particularly at Shaft number 2, the implementation of safety rules and regulations was obstructed by an inappropriate attitude adopted by certain employees to discipline which expressed itself at times in entirely unacceptable and illegal industrial activities,” said Mr Loxton.
Mine safety raised at inquiry

Ronja Grawitzky

THE mechanical functioning of the runaway locomotive in the Vaal Reefs mine disaster and the reason why it was in a prohibited area at the time of the accident will be raised by Anglo American during the joint inquiry into the incident.

This was stated by Anglo's senior council Chris Loxton in his opening statement on the first day of the proceedings yesterday.

On the other hand, Advocate Karel Tip, representing the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the families of 64 killed mineworkers, said the issues surrounding the inquiry were far wider than "the resolution of the apparent conflict between the version of the locomotive driver and the report of the supplier of the locomotive's controller."

One-hundred-and-four mineworkers were killed in the disaster at Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft on May 10. The inquiry chairman Judge Ramon Leon is being assisted by two assessors Arnold John McKenzie and May-Ann Hermans. The proceedings are expected to last well into next year.

Tip said it was important to determine why no safety devices were in place "capable of stopping a locomotive moving under power before it and the man carriage apparently being pushed by it plunged over the edge and into the shaft."

He said other questions needed to be addressed relating to whether locomotive drivers were provided with training suited to the underground environment, whether adequate supervision existed and whether a meaningful "culture of safety" existed on the mine.

Tip said there appeared to be a clear divide between underground workers who said safety devices at the "farm-gate" were never in place and supervisory personnel who said they were.

Tip said some locomotive drivers questioned had indicated safety devices were in place, while others implied there were "routine breaches of important safety procedures."

Continued on Page 2

Loxton said the mine "would not shrink from establishing the truth, whatever that might be."

He said evidence would be presented on "the safety philosophy" of the mine and those responsible for implementation of safety rules and regulations. "The weak point of most safety rules... is often not their content but their implementation and the degree of compliance therewith by employees," he said.

Loxton said at No 2 shaft there was evidence that implementation of safety rules was obstructed by an inappropriate attitude to discipline adopted by certain employees "which expressed itself at times in entirely unacceptable and illegal industrial activities."
Vaal Reefs inquiry opens

By Justice Malala
Labour Reporter

The movements of the locomotive which plunged down the Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft on May 10, crushing to death 104 men in one of South Africa's worst mining accidents, will be the main focus of the inquiry into the accident.

In his opening address to the inquiry — chaired by Judge Ramon Loxton — counsel for mine-owners Anglo American Corporation Chris Loxton SC, said the movements, condition and functioning of the locomotive would be important.

The inquiry started in Johannesburg yesterday and is expected to deliberate until well into 1986. Its brief is to establish the cause of the accident and who was responsible for it. It may recommend prosecution of those found responsible.

Only one witness took the stand yesterday: Vaal Reefs health and safety co-ordinator Robert Proutfoot described his role at the mine and explained technical terms which would be used in evidence, the structure of the mine, the circumstances surrounding mining operations and the duties of various employees on a mine.

Loxton said the movements of, and the repairs and maintenance to, the locomotive would be issues for deliberation. He said the functioning of the locomotive, its controller and a device called a loge card, would be considered to ascertain its safety and whether it could behave in the manner described by its driver, Tsephang Mota.

He said once the evidence had been presented, it would then be appropriate to hear the "controversial" evidence of the driver and the sole witness to the accident, a Mr Motemekane.

"There is evidence that, at Vaal Reefs Mine, more particularly at Shaft No 2, the implementation of safety rules and regulations was obstructed by an inappropriate attitude adopted by certain employees to discipline which expressed itself at times in entirely unacceptable and illegal industrial activities."
Mine probe: Lift broke up on way down.

(P. O. S. E. A. Special Correspondent)

In his report, the P. O. S. E. A. Special Correspondent described the incident involving a mine probe that broke up on its way down. The report highlighted the critical moment when the probe encountered unexpected resistance, leading to its sudden and unexpected disintegration.

The report further explained that the probe was engaged in a routine operation when it encountered an unknown obstacle. The exact nature of this obstacle was not specified, but it was clear that the probe was not prepared for such an incident.

The immediate response was an attempt to stabilize the situation, but due to the unexpected nature of the obstruction, the probe was forced to break up. The report noted that the incident was unfortunate, as it represented a significant setback for ongoing operations.

The Special Correspondent concluded by stressing the importance of thorough pre-operation checks and the need for advanced technology to prevent such incidents in the future.
Safety stops 'not in place' at mine

Renee Grawitzky

SAFETY devices did not appear to be in place at the time of the Vaal Reefs mine accident. One of the main safety devices — the stop block — was not in place as it was being constructed when the locomotive plunged down the shaft and collided with a cage carrying 104 mine workers.

This was suggested during day two of the joint inquest-inquiry into the Vaal Reefs disaster by Anglo America's first witness — safety and health co-ordinator for Vaal Reefs East Mine Robert Proudfoot — who began presenting "non-controversial" evidence yesterday.

During Anglo's opening statement Chris Lowson — assisted by Frank Bashall and instructed by Brink Cohen Le Roux & Rooft — said it was important the structure and manner in which mining took place was fully explained before the contentious issues were addressed.

Proudfoot said evidence in the form of photographs and diagrams suggested the gate was not in place before the locomotive plunged from level 56 down the mine shaft.

He also said evidence would be led that after the accident when supervisors went down...to investigate the accident two other safety devices — aeroplane sprays — were not in place at the time of the accident, but that somehow one had been replaced after the accident.

Judge Ramon Leon questioned whether these safety devices — if they had been in place — would have been able to stop the locomotive.

Proudfoot said the devices were not designed to stop a locomotive under power, travelling at a high speed, but that this matter would be addressed by expert witnesses.

Proudfoot said the stop block — one of the safety devices — had been in the process of being constructed and had not yet been installed at 56 level where the accident occurred. Proudfoot will continue presenting "non-contentious" evidence today on "the relevant mining activities, procedures and manpower structures."

Other parties represented and recognised by the inquest-inquiry as having an interest include the locomotive driver, Isang Mpoa, represented by Alec Freund, Rand Mutual Assurance Company, the mineral and energy affairs department, the Underground Officials Association and the Electrical Workers' Association.
Digging away at the truth

Malala looks ahead to the Vaal Reefs disaster inquiry

The inquiry into the circumstances leading to the death of 104 miners in Vaal Reefs' number 2 shaft, three months ago got under way in the Mineralini building in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, yesterday.

It is an impersonal, technical and tedious affair; dominated by suited men with mounds of files and legal and technical jargon falling easily off their lips.

None of the dead men's families is present. An interpreter is on hand to translate the proceedings for them, but the technicality of the language would probably have alienated them, any way.

Meanwhile, about 4,900 people were working at number 2 shaft yesterday, blasting and drilling away in the bowels of the earth.

Their profession is described as probably the most dangerous in the world. Certainly, it is one of the most thankless – the National Union of Mineworkers says minimum wages on some gold mines are as low as R400 a month.

"The sheer magnitude of the tragedy which occurred at Vaal Reefs would, under any circumstances, set it apart from the more usual mining accident," says Anglo American counsel Chris Lorton.

It was the worst mining disaster in South Africa since the Kinross disaster of 1985, which claimed 177 lives.

The inquiry is expected to last until next year.
Mine lift cage disintegrated before it hit ground - evidence

By Justice Malala

The man cage which plunged down Vaal Reefs gold mine's number 2 shaft on May 10, killing 104 miners, appeared to have started disintegrating and dragging its occupants before it reached the bottom of the shaft.

This was said on the second day of the inquest inquiry into the disaster in which a locomotive plunged down the shaft on to the man cage, crushing to death its occupants, by counsel for mine owners Anglo American Chris Loxton, SC.

Loxton explained that pictures presented to Mr Justice Ramon Leon and his two assessors showed blood marks on the sides of the shaft suggested that the man cage had started disintegrating on its way down.

The inquest inquiry is expected to deliberate until well into next year.

It has to establish the cause of the accident and who was, on available evidence, responsible for it.

The inquest inquiry may recommend prosecution of those found responsible.

Vaal Reefs Health and Safety co-ordinator Robert Proudfoot, who was the first to take the stand on Tuesday, continued his testimony yesterday, identifying and explaining various sections of the mine where the accident happened.

Asked by Leon why there was no stop block between the tracks leading up to the gate which opened on to the shaft, Proudfoot said at the time the tracks were being installed but the area at Level 56 had not yet been attended to.

Free-falling

A free block is a device put into the ground in the middle of the rail tracks to stop the locomotive from moving beyond a certain point.

In this case the blocks would have had to stop the locomotive from crashing into the shaft gates and plunging down the shaft and on to the man cage.

The man cage operates just like a lift, and the free-falling locomotive fell on top of it as it moved down at a slower speed.

This was suggested by a video presented to the inquiry yesterday, showing Anglo's understanding of what occurred at the time it was made, two days after the disaster.

Loxton said pictures showing marks on the shaft gate leading up to the shaft itself indicated that at the stage when the locomotive reached the tank trap - a place where a part of the tracks are removed to stop the locomotive from moving beyond that point - the locomotive had already left the rail tracks.

The pictures showed the marks made by the locomotive to be on the far side of the tank trap and others were on the concrete near the tracks.

Among the few attending the inquiry are Anglo gold division chairman Clem Sunter.

Loxton said in his opening address on Monday that the corporation had appointed new senior managers so that Sunter could devote more time to the Vaal Reefs probe.

The inquiry inquiry continues in Johannesburg today. It will conduct an inspection of the disaster scene tomorrow.
Safety devices 'missing'

By Abdul Mlazi
Labour Reporter

TWO crucial devices, a "tank trap" and "farm gate", which would have stopped the runaway locomotive which killed 104 mineworkers at Vaal Reefs Gold Mine in May this year, were not in place when disaster struck.

Giving evidence at the Leon inquest inquiry into the accident in Johannesburg yesterday, senior counsel for Anglo American Mr Chris Luxton said the devices were, however, not designed to stop a locomotive which was travelling at high speed and under pressure.

Luxton said whether the safety devices could have stopped the runaway locomotive from plunging into the shaft, was up to the experts to decide.

Luxton told Sowetan that Anglo American was as committed to finding the truth about the accident as the National Union of Mineworkers. He said the company had spent millions of rands investigating the accident and getting overseas experts to look into the matter.

"We have interviewed more than 100 witnesses, but we still don't know what happened. Nobody wants to say who was responsible," said Luxton.

NUM spokesman Mr Steve Ralou said the emphasis should not be on the individual driver of the locomotive, but the safety system that was in place.

The inquest continues.
Vaal Reefs inquest judge queries drivers' training

Renee Gravitsky

THE use of Fanagalo in the instruction for training locomotive drivers and the level of complexity of training courses was questioned by Vaal Reefs inquiry-inquest judge Ramon Leon during evidence presented by Anglo American's first witness Robert Proudfoot yesterday.

Proudfoot — safety and health co-ordinator for Vaal Reefs East Mine — provided a lengthy overview of the type of training provided to locomotive drivers and the driver of the locomotive which plunged down No 2 shaft.

Leon questioned the standard of literacy of the workforce on the mine and asked whether Fanagalo was used in training because of the literacy problem. He also questioned whether the training outlined by Proudfoot was not too complex in view of the fact that the training was conducted in Fanagalo. Proudfoot said the training was based on practical illustration.

Proudfoot said adult basic education and training programmes had been introduced to resolve the very low literacy levels. The programmes introduced were intended to bring the majority of the workforce up to a std 3 level by the end of five years, he said.

Other issues raised during yesterday's session — which would be addressed later on in the proceedings in more detail and in some cases by experts — related to the reason why the stop block on 56 level was being upgraded and whether less workers would have been killed if the humble hook had not become detached from the cage carrying 164 mineworkers.

Today parties represented and recognised by the inquest inquiry as having an interest, ranging from the National Union of Mineworkers to other unions such as the Underground Officials Association, will participate in an in loco inspection at the accident site.
Inquiry into Vaal Reefs disaster

Mine train driver was well trained

**BY JUSTICE MALALA**

The driver of the runaway locomotive which fell on top of a cage transporting 104 miners at the Vaal Reefs mine, crushing them to death, was well trained and had been doing the job for at least three years.

Testifying on the third day of the inquiry into the horrific mine accident on May 10, Vaal Reefs health and safety coordinator Robert Proudfoot said yesterday that driver Tsapang Mpolo had worked at the mine since 1987 and had received proper training for the job.

He said Mpolo had passed Standard 7 and had been a locomotive driver for more than three years.

The inquiry's spotlight yesterday fell on the training received by locomotive drivers at the mine, and on what safety measures had been implemented to prevent accidents.

Proudfoot explained that, in addition to the driver, the locomotives had to have a guard on board at all times when in motion.

**Guard**

In his opening address on Tuesday, counsel for mine-owners Anglo American, Chris Loxton, SC, indicated that the guard who was supposed to have been on the fateful locomotive, Mr Motemekane, was not on board when the accident happened. The function of the guard is to give the driver instructions when the locomotive is in motion, and to point out obstacles.

Motemekane, the sole witness to the accident on level 56, will give evidence later. Loxton said the drivers were trained in Pumangale — a mixture of various languages used on mines — and this was done because of literacy problems among workers.

Explaining other safety measures, Proudfoot said it was the duty of every worker to report any faulty mechanism as soon as he became aware of it. The driver was responsible for checking that the locomotive was safe before using it.

The inquiry is being held in Johannesburg. It will establish the cause of the accident and, if possible, who was responsible. It may recommend prosecution of those found responsible.

**Minister of Welfare and Population Development** Abe Williams yesterday handed a cheque for R3-million to the Vaal Reefs Disaster Fund on behalf of the Government.

**National Union of Mineworkers and fund president James Motatsi** said the donation brought the fund total to just over R11-million.
Mine probe ends first week

By JUSTICE MALALA

Health and safety regulations at Vaal Reefs gold mine came under the spotlight in the first week of the inquiry into the horrific death of 104 miners on May 10.

In testimony heard this week, and in an in loco inspection of the scene of the accident yesterday, inquiry chairman Mr Justice Roman Logan heard how two safety devices were not in place at the time of the accident.

Vaal Reefs health and safety co-ordinator Robert Proudfoot, the first person called to the stand on Tuesday, said the stop block had not been in place.

The miners died when a battery-operated 3-ton locomotive mysteriously burst through several safety devices on the mine's Level 56, 1,200 metres underground, and plunged on to a cage carrying the miners to another level.

The accident, the most horrific since the Kromme mine disaster of 1986 when 177 miners were killed, led to renewed calls for stricter health and safety regulations on mines.

The stop block is virtually the last line of defence for a runaway train.

It is a thick piece of steel inserted on to the floor between the rail tracks to prevent the locomotive going beyond a certain point.

The "farm gate", another device used to indicate that the locomotive should not go beyond a certain point - and which is supposed to be strong enough to bring a locomotive moving at reasonable speed to a halt - was also found not to be in place.

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2/News

♦ Mine inquiry

The farm gate was found lying on the side of the tracks when initial inspection of Level 56 was conducted after the accident.

The inquiry is expected to finish proceedings late next year.

It will seek to establish the cause of the accident and who was, on available evidence, to blame for it. It may recommend prosecution of those found responsible.

In evidence led by Anglo American this week, the commission focused on health and safety features at the mine and on the training given to drivers.

Proudfoot testified that Theung Mpota, the driver of the locomotive which crushed the miners to death, was well trained and had been doing the job for at least three years.

Mpota, who has a Standard 7 education and has worked at the mine since 1987, will give his evidence later on in the inquiry.
Mine disaster: Locomotive driver was well trained, inquiry hears

JUSTICE MALALA Staff Reporter

THE driver of the runaway locomotive which fell on a cage carrying 104 workers at the Vaal Reefs mine, causing them to death, was well trained and had been doing the job for at least three years.

Testifying on the third day of the inquiry into the accident on May 10, Vaal Reefs health and safety co-ordinator Robert Proudfoot said loco driver Tsepong Mpolo had worked at the mine since 1987 and had received proper training for the job.

He said Mr Mpolo had passed Standard 7 and had been a loco driver for more than three years.

The spotlight at the inquiry fell on the training received by locomotive drivers and safety measures employed.

Mr Proudfoot explained that, apart from the driver, locomotives had to have a guard on board whenever they were operational.

In his opening address on Tuesday, mine owner Anglo American’s counsel, Chris Loxton SC indicated that the guard who was supposed to have been on the locomotive, a Mr Motemekoeane, was not on board when the accident happened.

The guard gives the loco driver instructions when he is driving, pointing out obstacles. Mr Motemekoeane, the sole witness to the accident on level 54, will give evidence later.

Mr Proudfoot also said the driver was responsible for checking that the loco was in a safe condition before using it.

He said the drivers were trained in fanagalo — a mixture of various languages used on mines which has lately fallen out of favour — and this was done because of literacy problems among workers.

Explaining other safety measures, Mr Proudfoot said it was the duty of every worker to report any faulty mechanism as soon as he became aware of it.

The inquiry is being held in Johannesburg. It will establish the cause of the accident, who was responsible for it and may recommend prosecution of those found responsible.

Meanwhile, Minister of Welfare and Population Development Abe Williams has handed a cheque for R5 million to the Vaal Reefs Disaster Fund on behalf of the government.

President of the National Union of Mineworkers and the fund James莫托蒂 said the contribution brought the total in the fund to just over R11 million.

He said a delegation, including Anglo American gold and uranium division chairman Cler Sunter, would visit the victims’ families in Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique to assess their needs before deciding how to use the money.
Commission faces danger during Vaal Reefs inspection

BY JUSTICE MALALA

Lawyers on the commission investigating the Vaal Reefs mine disaster came face to face with the dangers facing workers underground when they visited the accident scene on Friday.

The party had to cut short an inspection of the shaft well on Level 56, where the accident occurred, when several objects fell down the shaft.

The incident necessitated that the party, led by commission head Mr Justice Ramon Leon, evacuate the area after two warnings that conditions were unsafe.

Mr Justice Leon is investigating the May tragedy which saw 164 miners die when a 78-ton locomotive apparently crashed through several safety devices and plunged down the shaft.

It fell on top of a double-decker man cage carrying the 104 and crushed them to death.

In an inspection of health and safety regulations on Level 56, 1260m underground, the commission found that two essential safety devices were not in place at the time of the accident.

Stop blocks which are meant to prevent the locomotive coming near the shaft were not in place, the commission was told last week.

The commission has also been told that a "farm gate", another safety device, was not in place when the accident happened.

The vital piece of railing which forms part of the farm gate and which should have been placed across the rail tracks to prevent the tram from going ahead to the shaft well, was recorded to have been at the side of the tracks when the first inspection took place after the accident.

The commission will hear testimony from other witnesses to be called by mine owners Anglo American.

The trip down to Level 56 made by legal teams and members of the press at a speed of between 6m a second and 8m a second, was both claustrophobic and scary.

The man cage, carrying 50 people on its top deck and another 50 in the lower one, hurtled down the shaft at a speed that made atmospheric pressure changes almost intolerable.
'No underground inspection done'

Ronée Grawitzky

VAAL: Reeds East Mine's safety and health co-ordinator told the Vaal Reeds mine disaster joint inquiry on Friday that since he had taken over monitoring safety at No 2 shaft in March he had not embarked on an underground inspection of the safety mechanisms until the in loco inspection on Friday.

Under cross examination by the National Union of Mineworkers senior counsellor Karel Tip, Robert Proudfoot said that after No 2 shaft had become part of the East division, the mine had concentrated on areas which had a history of accidents. He said there was no history of accidents in the shaft station areas but in the stopes.

One hundred and four mineworkers were killed when a locomotive plunged down the shaft and crashed into a man cage.

Tip questioned Proudfoot on the survey which eventually led to the reappraisal of safety mechanisms at No 2 shaft.

Proudfoot said he had been unaware of the survey, its findings and the intention to upgrade the stop blocks in place in the prohibited station areas until after the accident on May 10.

Tip said it may have been expected that a person in a senior position would have known about the programme of upgrading the safety mechanisms. Proudfoot agreed that he should have been informed of this before the accident.

Tip asked whether the safety devices — if all had been in place — would have been sufficient to stop a runaway locomotive under power.

Proudfoot said it could have been possible, but that tests were being carried out by experts.

Tip said it appeared that training conducted by the mine was not geared to focus on safety but on productivity and to equip the employee with what he had to do in the job to be efficient.

He raised a number of examples to illustrate that what occurred underground was not in line with guidelines and training conducted by the mine.

For example, the fact that the man cage was supposed to carry 50 people on a deck — instead 104 mineworkers died on May 10.

At the outset of the proceedings yesterday Judge Ramon reprimanded the media for creating the incorrect impression that the causes of the accident had already been established as well as the findings at the in loco inspection on Friday.

He said the media should not preempt the findings of the inquiry and should report on the proceedings in an accurate and objective way so as not to be unfair to either party.
Vaal Reefs inquest grills safety chief

BY JUSTICE MALALA

The testimony of Robert Proudfoot, Vaal Reefs gold mine health and safety co-ordinator, will remain the focus of the Leon Commission of Inquiry into the death of 104 mineworkers when it resumes tomorrow.

The tragedy happened on May 10 when a highly powered locomotive went out of control and plunged down a mine shaft on to a man cage transporting the workers.

After two days of gruelling cross-examination by State counsel and counsel for NUM, Proudfoot will face counsel for the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs.

Proudfoot said on Monday that a log book kept by the driver of the disaster locomotive was still missing after efforts to trace it failed.

Proudfoot admitted that the log book, which should detail irregularities on the locomotive on a weekly basis, and which is kept on the driver at all times, had to his knowledge still not been found.

Tsepano Mpota, the driver of the locomotive, will testify later. The commission is expected to complete its work next year and may recommend prosecution of parties involved in the tragedy.

When cross-examined by Karel Tip, counsel for NUM and the families of the victims, Proudfoot admitted he had not inspected the scene of the accident since his appointment in March.

He testified that he visited the scene of the accident for the first time last Friday when commissi...
Hostels deal invites worker participation

Renee Grawitzky

AN AGREEMENT laying the foundation for the democratisation of hostels and the broader participation of workers in housing options was signed this week between mining house JCI and the National Union of Mineworkers.

The agreement covers 22,000 workers on four gold and coal mines. It stems from an agreement reached at last year’s negotiations which outlined principles for the establishment of housing forums, the upgrading of hostels and the involvement of workers in “decision making processes in hostel affairs”.

The JCI agreement aims to establish a two-tier system per mine of hostel committees and housing forums” which would “be inclusive of all affected employees.”

JCI MD Bill Nunn said the company had decided “to facilitate the availability of suitably developed housing land” after it became evident that home ownership at the lower end of the market was a “multi-faceted problem.”

Nunn said one of the housing projects the company had become involved in was on the West Rand where a proportion of a potential 10,000 stands would be made available to JCI employees at favourable rates, and the remainder would be given to the surrounding communities to develop.

The agreement had established structures which would enable these employees to still wish to live in hostels to “have a voice in a democratic administration.”

NUM general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe said the agreement was significant “because over the years we have raised issues of the problem around the migrant labour system and social problems attached to it which always impacted negatively on motivation of the workforce and on productivity.”

He said the agreement would go a long way towards stabilising the workforce and addressing the demand for the democratisation of hostels. It was now important to begin integrating mineworkers into the surrounding communities.

Hostel residents would be able to elect representatives (one per 250 residents) to a hosts committee. This committee would be involved in “co-determination in areas which do not have financial or legal implications for mine management.”

The agreement clearly states “the fundamental responsibility for the managing of and maintenance of good order in the hostels rests with management.”

Workers would be consulted on issues such as upgrading of hostels, safety and security of residents while joint agreement would have to be reached on issues around the communication systems and hostel disciplinary procedures.

Gengold has also recently entered into an agreement with NUM on the provision of housing and accommodation.

‘Disaster’ mine scrutinised

Renee Grawitzky

VAAL REIFS ESTATE Mines’ safety and health co-ordinator on Tuesday told the joint mine inquiry into the Vaal Reifs mine disaster that apart from the “no entry” sign before the entrance to the prohibited area there had been no system in place before the accident to stop a locomotive under power.

Under cross-examination by the locomotive driver’s representative, Alec Freund, Robert Proudfoot said that from his knowledge the safety devices in place in the station area were not designed to stop a locomotive under power.

Freund questioned whether locomotive drivers were taught the purpose of the safety devices and whether these devices were intended to stop a locomotive under power.

Proudfoot said: “Drivers were not taught the distinction between the purposes of the safety devices, or how they were affected if the locomotive was under power or pushed or pulled by hand.”

Under cross-examination by National Union of Mineworkers’ senior counsel Karel Tij, Proudfoot said locomotives under power were not allowed in the prohibited station area because of the risk of it falling into the mine shaft.

Proudfoot said that if the employees had obeyed the rules and done their job properly by keeping the locomotives out of the station area, together with the safety devices being in place which could or could not have stopped the locomotive, the accident would not have occurred.

Rangel du Toit acting on behalf of the State raised the point that since the accident there had been an incident where a locomotive was driven under power into the station area.

He questioned the procedure relevant when a locomotive was left on the station area. Proudfoot said a worker should wait for a supervisor or shift boss to come before the locomotive was moved and if no-one else was available then other locomotive drivers should be asked to assist.

There was no supervisor present during the disaster.
No comment
on mine diary

(212) 96 118 345
Hennie Grobler

VAAL Reefs East Mine's safety and health co-ordinator said yesterday he was unable to comment on entries in a mine overseer's diary which implied there were problems with discipline and safety at the shaft where 104 miners were killed.

The joint inquest-inquiry into the disaster was bearing evidence from Robert Proudfoot, under cross-examination by Hennie de Vos for the mineral and energy affairs department.

Proudfoot said the shaft foreman was required to inspect that safety devices were in place while the on-setters and mine overseers were responsible for ensuring the necessary safety devices were in place.

He acknowledged that at some mines shafts — not at Vaal Reefs — devices were in place which prevented locos from being driven into the shaft area.

De Vos then quoted an extract from a report published in the Association of Mine Managers of SA papers and discussion volume I for 1982-83 and requested Proudfoot to comment. The report was written by Andreas Hendriks Faute, at the time the assistant manager of Free State Saaplaas gold mine.

The extract quoted by De Vos related to the designing of a station area to "make provision for the installation of suitable car overrun devices in order to protect the shaft from runaway hoppers and cars, and in particular from runaway locos."

Proudfoot was unable to comment and the parties present agreed that the document should be circulated to all interested parties and experts would comment later. Judge Raulon Leon said that this could prove important.
"Safety weak" at Vaal Reefs

BY JUSTICE MALALA

The health and safety coordinator of Vaal Reefs mine's No 2 shaft, where 104 miners died in an accident on May 10, yesterday agreed that notes made by an overseer earlier in the year suggested there were problems with safety discipline in the section.

Excerpts from the notes, made in a mine overseer's diary at the mine on January 9, said: "Safety very weak. What will we do?" and "Safety must now be bettered."

Responding to Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs' advocate Henkie de Vos' suggestion, mine safety coordinator Robert Proudfoot agreed that there were problems with discipline in the section.

The 104 workers were crushed to death when a locomotive used in underground operations fell on top of a lift cage containing the victims.

The locomotive went through an area where trains under power were not allowed.

Asked by De Vos if he was aware that there were safety devices which could stop a locomotive under power from moving beyond a certain point, Proudfoot said he had seen one being tested after the accident.

He said he had not seen such a device at Vaal Reefs.

De Vos then quoted an expert, Dr AH Taute, who said it was necessary when designing a shaft station — the area in which locomotives under power are not allowed — to ensure that locomotives did not go beyond a certain point.

Although commission of inquiry chairman Mr Justice Ramon Leon said it was not in Proudfoot's range of expertise to comment on the quote, he said the quote could, on available evidence, very well "go to the roots of this commission."
Mine rescue 'slowed down by shortage of body bags'.

The Leon Commission of Inquiry into the Vaal Reefs gold mine disaster was told yesterday how the body parts of dead miners were recovered by six mine proto rescue teams.

The tragedy, on May 10 this year, occurred when an underground locomotive plunged down a vertical shaft, killing 104 miners in a double-storey cage lift at the mine in Orkney in the Free State.

Larry Godfrey Biggs, mine overseer at the No 4 shaft of Vaal Reefs, said in an affidavit that he and his "Wes A" team were the first to enter the shaft bottom, where they began to recover body parts - torsos, legs and arms - from the vicinity of the damaged cage.

He said each body bag was "tagged, logged and sent out of the mine with a continuity witness. It was then handed to ambulance and security staff at the No 5 shaft surface bank. Biggs said proto captains decided to cut away the steel plates to gain access to the cage. He said the rescue operation had been slowed down due to a shortage of bags and stretchers.

Biggs said the disaster had traumatised him and his family, and he had to seek psychological counselling.

The hearing continues on Monday.
Details given on Vaal Reefs disaster.
Details given on Vaal Reefs disaster

FIVE of the 104 mine-workers killed in the Vaal Reefs mine disaster were identified by identity cards and lamp batteries found at the bottom of the mine's No 2 shaft as well as by family members, the joint inquest and inquiry into the disaster heard on Friday.

Vaal Reefs Exploration and Mining Company senior personnel officer Hermanus Grobler said mine staff were able to identify the other 99 workers from fingerprints.

A record of all employees who clocked in prior to the accident had been used as a basis for the search. Of those recorded 104 employees never clocked out.

The inquest and inquiry earlier heard that 371 people had clocked in at the time of the accident. Most of those had been unaware of it when they clocked out.

Vaal Reefs West "A" mine proto team captain Larry Biggs said in a submission that rescue teams began their recovery operation the morning after the cage plummeted to the bottom of the 72-level shaft.

Steel plates on the cage's upper deck were cut away to expose the bodies, but the process of removing them was slowed down due to a shortage of body bags and stretchers.

The teams began removing bodies from the bottom deck the following morning. Hard hats, identification cards, pouches, belts, cap lamps, batteries, CO2 detectors and clothing were also retrieved.

All rescue workers, as well as their spouses, underwent counselling.

The inquest and inquiry also heard that blood, boots and clothing were found near level 65 of the shaft. Engineer in charge of the repair and rehabilitation of No 2 Shaft, Edwin Atisa, said both sling gates on level 69 were missing.

Under questioning from Judge Ramon Leon, Atisa said he could not comment on the adequacy of a powered locomotive's safety devices.
Three Vaal Reefs accidents cited

Renee Grawitzky

A DOCUMENT giving details of three accidents at Vaal Reefs similar to the accident on May 10 in which 104 people were killed was tabled at the point of inquiry into the disaster yesterday.

The accidents occurred at No 1 and No 2 shafts between 1973 and 1994 but there were no casualties, the document said.

Under cross examination by National Union of Mineworkers senior counsel Karel Tip, Stephanus Bekker, a banksman at Vaal Reefs, said he had not heard of any accidents where a locomotive had fallen down the mine shaft, but he had heard of cars falling down the shaft.

A banksman co-ordinates the loading of men and material from the surface.

At that point Tip presented a document sent to the acting government mining engineer from the regional director in Klerksdorp on the three accidents at the mine which were similar to the Vaal Reefs disaster.

Bekker said he had not heard of the 1977 accident when a locomotive ran out of control on 42 level at No 1 shaft and fell down the shaft.

Tip referred Bekker to a second accident which occurred in July 1992 at No 2 shaft when four material cars fell down the shaft. Tip quoted from the section of the accident report which said “incorrect design of station tankput stopblock.”

Bekker said since he had become a banksman in 1990 he had heard a lot of debate on how to ensure safety of the station area.

The third accident which Tip referred to occurred in December 1992, also at No 2 shaft, when a material car fell down the subshaft.

During evidence presented by Anglo American’s safety and health co-ordinator Robert Proudfoot, mention was made of an independent safety survey conducted at No 2 and No 8 shafts. This survey was made available by the mine and was presented in evidence by Tip, who said it was relevant to the questioning of banksmen.

Tip quoted a section of the report compiled by Wiek Reets in November 1994. “In my opinion the present arrestors are insufficient on the banks and stations.” However, he had been assured that additional arrestors were being installed.

Bekker said he did not know about this report or the installation of stop blocks, but said attempts were being made to improve the stop blocks.
Relatives hear how miners died

BY JUSTICE MALALA

Three women — a mother, her daughter and another woman wearing a black hat denoting her state of mourning — listened impassively as a translator described to them the last known moments of the man cage that carried their relatives to their deaths.

The three, relatives of two of the 104 mine-workers who died in the tragic Vaal Reefs mine disaster on May 10, started attending the proceedings of the inquest inquiry into the death of the mine-workers, held in Braamfontein, on Monday. They are the first of the mine-workers' relatives to attend the proceedings which began two weeks ago.

The mine-workers were crushed to death when an underground locomotive plunged on top of a man cage carrying the men down the shaft.

Jan van der Westhuizen, the man responsible for the operation of the "man wunder" which controls the hoisting and lowering of the cage, told the commission that on the night of the accident, at about 8.16 pm, he had started lowering the workers in the cage.

He said at about that time, while the cage was moving downwards, the winch indicated that the cable that holds the cage was slack.

"I began trying to reset the machine after the winch indicated that there was a slack cable. About a minute later the emergency bell started ringing," he said.

Stephanus Bekker, responsible for the safety of workers getting into the cage and ensuring the 50-person per deck limit set for the two-deck cage is not exceeded, said it was not true black and white workers used different cages or descended at separate times.

He said on May 10, while he was closing the cage a white man got out and said he wanted to have a cup of coffee and "would descend with a later cage."

He said he did not know the man's name and the man did not say whether anything had happened while he was in the cage.

**Shocked**

Counsel for the National Union of Mineworkers, Karel Tp, asked him if he had been approached about the fact that there were more mineworkers in the cage than the legal 100, and if any disciplinary action was likely.

Bekker said there had been no such approaches.

He said he was shocked when he heard the emergency bell ringing from level 56, where the locomotive had been.

Tasked with finding the causes of the accident and recommending prosecution of the responsible parties if necessary, the proceedings of the commission, chaired by Justice Ramon Leon are likely to continue into next year.

The mother and daughter who attended yesterday lost a son and a brother in the accident, while the other woman lost a relative.
Expert warns on danger of substandard equipment

Renee Grawitzky

OCCUPATIONAL safety across all sectors and the use and supply of substandard safety equipment should be brought to light in the wake of the Vaal Reefs disaster, a manufacturer and distributor of Personal Protection Equipment Ron Anderson said yesterday.

Anderson said suppliers of substandard equipment either chose to ignore the SA Bureau of Standards or were indifferent to the consequences for the worker who used the substandard safety products.

He said "the SABS and the department of labour should be responsible for the policing of this industry, but unfortunately there are not enough inspectors to inspect all potential infringements."

Anderson said there were a lot of well-qualified professionals in the safety equipment industry — but there are "certain customers and suppliers who will ultimately give health and safety professionals a bad name because saving money is more important than somebody's wellbeing."

Anderson said the Occupational Health and Safety Act would be ineffective if workers' health and safety were at risk because of the use of substandard safety equipment, or if they were not properly educated on how to use the product.

Meanwhile, the Construction Industry Health and Safety Forum was launched last week and included representation from both unions and employers operating in the industry.

The forum has appointed a number of subcommittees to deal with safety training, the promotion of occupational health and safety, and publications and promotional material.
Task group to reveal findings on mine safety

Renee Grawitzky

A TASK group consisting of representatives from mining industry employers, government and the National Union of Mineworkers established to draft new mining health and safety legislation will present its recommendations to the Mining Regulating Advisory Committee this week.

In line with the Leon Commission's recommendations into mine safety, Cabinet approved the Mineral and Energy Affairs portfolio committee's recommendations that the advisory committee - a tripartite forum - be empowered to draft a new Bill. It will be finalised by September.

In line with the timetable outlined by the portfolio committee, a draft Bill will be presented to Cabinet for approval in principle in October. By early next year the Bill and comments from interested parties will be presented to the portfolio committee.

The task group has agreed on a number of objectives of the proposed Act including the overriding aim "to protect the health and safety of persons employed at mines".

Broad objectives include the provision of a framework for monitoring and inspecting health and safety at mines and the establishment of a mine health and safety inspectorate; fostering and facilitating cooperation and consultation on health and safety at all levels through the establishment of councils and committees; imposing duties on owners, managers, manufacturers and employees and the provision of certain rights to employees and establishing ways to determine the health and safety of employees.
Conflict over mine disaster

JOHANNESBURG Two Vaal Reefs mine employees differed in their testimony to the Leon Commission of Inquiry yesterday over whether safety devices were in place on the day 104 miners were killed by a runaway locomotive.

Mr Ngosele Bennet Potsane, an assistant onsetter, repeated earlier evidence that he left a “farm gate” safety device open when he knocked off on the day of the accident.

The farm gate prevents locomotives and underground rail vehicles from getting dangerously close to the shaft.

Mr Potsane said a “man carnage” and a locomotive on the track had prevented him from closing the farm gate.

Cross-examined by counsel Mr R du Toit, for the state, on why he could not push the man carnage and the locomotive out of the way, Mr Potsane said he was “not a driver and did not have the keys”.

However, onsetter Mr Chris du Plooy, Mr Potsane’s supervisor, testified that the safety devices had been restored and the farm gate was closed.

The hearing continues — Sapa
JOHANNESBURG: The horizontal bar of a "farm gate" — a safety device that should have prevented the deaths of 104 Vaal Reefs gold mine workers — had been missing for 15 years, the Leon Commission of Inquiry was told yesterday.

The commission, headed by Mr Justice Ramon Leon, is investigating events that led to the deaths on May 10 when a locomotive fell down the mine's number two shaft to a double-storey lift carrying the men.

Assistant overseer Mr Mzuvukile Ngilane told the inquiry that since working at number two shaft from 1980, he had never seen the horizontal bar of the farm gate.

"That is 15 years ago Mr Ngilane," remarked Judge Leon.

Under cross-examination by counsel for the mine Mr Chris Lox- ton, Mr Ngilane said he had been trained at the mine school, although he earlier denied having gone to the mine school, saying he had been trained "on the job".

He admitted that he had not reported the missing device, despite having been taught this at the school.

Mr Ngilane worked an afternoon shift on the day of the accident.

The hearing continues — Sapa.
Johannesburg: A safety officer at Vaal Reefs gold mine told the Leon commission of inquiry on Friday that mine officials had used Fanakalo when trying to get a locomotive driver to explain how the vehicle had plunged down a mine shaft.

The commission, chaired by Mr Justice Ramor Lern, is investigating an accident on May 10 in which 104 miners died.

Mr Hendrik Jacobus Wood was asked by the driver's counsel, Mr A. Freund, to testify in Fanakalo to test his proficiency.

Mr Wood went underground minutes after the disaster.

Mr Freund said: "You used Fanakalo to talk to Mr Mpotha (the locomotive driver). Do you agree that Fanakalo is not a clear language? Why did you use it?"

"Why didn't you make use of a National Union of Mineworkers official who was present to interpret?"

Mr Wood said he had not thought to do this.

The hearing continues — Sapa
Miners sign milestone accommodation package

Renee Grawitzky

AN AGREEMENT providing for worker participation in accommodation issues on and off mine premises and allowing for mine workers to choose the type of accommodation they want, has been reached between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and Gengold.

The housing and accommodation agreement covering 35 000 workers on 11 Gengold mines was formally signed on Friday. It provides for the establishment of elected hostel residents' committees, joint housing forums and a central Gengold housing forum.

The agreement acknowledges that mine workers "have been subjected to poor accommodation facilities due to the migrant labour system, as well as to certain legal constraints which were previously applicable to migrant workers". In line with this agreement, unlike other housing agreements in the mining industry, undertakes to assist foreign workers to obtain citizenship "to be able to participate in national, regional and company housing initiatives".

Albert de Beer of Gengold said the agreement would facilitate the education of workers and the dissemination of housing information. He said workers could be ignorant about options and the issues involved in home ownership.

Gilbert Mphahlele of Num said: "We have fought long and hard for this agreement and we now have to ensure that it becomes practice on the ground and has a real impact on workers' lives."

Evidence of accidents at Vaal Reefs

Renee Grawitzky

A NUMBER of documents outlining lists of accidents were presented as evidence on Friday at the Vaal Reefs inquiry.

One accident involved "rolling stock" which fell down shafts and other reported accidents involved all tracks and tramming on Vaal Reefs as well as other mines.

National Union of Mineworkers counsel Karl Tip questioned Hennie Woods, the safety officer at No 2 shaft, about accidents that had occurred at the mine involving cars falling down shafts.

Tip focused on an accident in 1992.

Woods said in response to a question by Tip that the safety devices on 56 level were sufficient for hand trampling and not for power locomotives.

Woods also agreed that the safety philosophy on the mine was that power locomotives would not enter the shaft because they were forbidden to enter the station area. Woods said each person should be responsible for his own safety.

There were also people who monitored safety.

Woods said accidents had occurred after objects had fallen down shafts.

When the locomotive at 56-level fell to the shaft bottom on May 10, detached wheels and damaged battery cells apparently struck the Mary Ann cage at 62-level station injuring employees in the cage.

A document listing nine employees who were injured was also presented as evidence.

Most of the employees suffered from neck and head injuries and burns from the battery acid.

At the beginning of proceedings Friday, Woods presented evidence about what the driver of the locomotive allegedly said after the accident.

Woods alleged that Mthuthu said locomotive 26B was not working and climbed inside locomotive 54B to move it.

Counsel for the driver Alec Freem said this was incorrect as there was nothing wrong with locomotive 26B.

The proceedings continue today.
Disaster mine safety ‘monitor’ questioned

Renee Grawitzky

UNDERGROUND inspection of the station area next to Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft was conducted four times a year, safety officer Henne Woods Jr said yesterday.

Only one in four inspections was a surprise inspection, he said at the joint inquest and inquiry into the May 10 accident in which 104 people died.

Woods, examined by Japie Maritz on behalf of the mineral and energy affairs department, said safety devices were always in place in the station area.

His logbook indicated that on one occasion “stop blocks and other safety devices were not in use”.

In response to a question about a survey by independent consultant Wk Roets of safety at shafts two and eight, Woods said he had heard about it for the first time during the inquiry.

The judge said it seemed curious to the court that a safety officer was not told about the survey.

Maritz asked whether Woods felt the safety devices in place could stop a locomotive under power and whether he had been consulted on what devices could perform this function. Woods said he had not been consulted and did not have the technical knowledge in that regard.

Sapa reports Woods said “I monitor safety but I’m not responsible for safety”.

Chris Loxton, on behalf of Anglo American Corporation, presented documents detailing inspections carried out at Vaal Reefs during February 1991 and June 1995.

The reports from the inspections showed that “no record of shaft station safety devices being found not in place by our client could be found”.

Sapa reports that earlier National Union of Mineworkers counsel Karel TIp quoted from the Mineral Act. “No person shall be appointed as a safety officer unless he is able to identify any potential threat to the safety of persons employed in or at the mine.”

The regulation quoted formed part of Woods’ letter of appointment as safety officer a month before the tragedy.

The letter, signed by Vaal Reefs mine manager MJ Prinsloo, called on Woods to familiarise himself with the requirements of the Minerals Act and other regulations.

Asked by Maritz if he had read a comprehensive Vaal Reefs safety audit report by independent mine consultant W Roets, Woods said he knew the expert but had not seen the report.

Roets, assigned by Vaal Reefs to conduct a safety audit last year, found the mine safety devices to be insufficient and made recommendations to management.

Roets had not had any discussions with him, Woods said.

Maritz said: “The point is that safety was your responsibility. Your position here is spelt out.”
Mine plunge loco was 'dangerous'
Vaal Reefs locomotive 'was in unsafe state'

Renee Gravitch

THE locomotive which fell down Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft was in a dangerous condition after its controller had been affected by the deliberate bridging by an unknown person of the line contactor and the fuse.

This was evidence presented to the combined inquest and inquiry into the accident at the shaft which killed 104 men on May 10.

Prof Mike Case, of RAU's electrical engineering faculty, said safety features in the prime control element in the controller had been inhibited by the bridging.

Case was involved in compiling a report on whether there was possible malfunctioning of the electric locomotive which could cause it to act in an uncontrolled manner and travel without the power control lever being activated.

He said parts recovered from the accident site "were insufficient in number and condition to establish conclusively from technical evidence alone" what caused the accident. However, various scenarios could be extrapolated from the technical evidence.

Case said the examination of the controller reflected that, besides the bridging of the fuse (which interrupts the flow of current) and line contactor, the shunt had been burnt off.

Responding to a question by National Union of Mineworkers counsel Karel Tjo, Case said the shunt could have been damaged by the application of brakes. He said the state of the controller could have resulted in the "potential for a runaway."
Mine duty electrician 'was undertrained'

Renee Grawitzky 80 31/8/95

THE electrician who was to have fixed a locomotive on May 10 — the day it plunged down Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft, killing 104 people — did not have the required training to fulfill such a function.

Bernard Kennedy for the SA Electrical Workers' Union, responding to a question from Judge Hamon Leon, said that would be argued in the evidence presented by the electrician, Frank Khoza.

Khoza was speaking yesterday during the joint inquest and inquiry into the accident.

Rand Afrikans University electrical engineering faculty professor Mike Case, presenting expert evidence in the past two days on the state of the locomotive's controller, said a qualified artisan or someone who had an N2 (the technical equivalent of standard nine) would have needed further training to maintain and repair the controller.

Case said: "This type of device is not covered in normal technical college training."

In response to Kennedy's asking about someone with no training at all, Case said no industrial equipment should be in the hands of someone with no training.

During previous evidence, Case said that on examination of the controller after the accident, it was evident that its contactor and fuse had been bridged by an individual who appeared to have some electrical knowledge.

Besides this, the thyristor had been short-circuited and the shunt had fused. If the locomotive had been in that state at the beginning of the accident, it could not have run away, he said.

It could have done this only if the shunt had been intact.

Case said he was left with two hypotheses, but could not with certainty state which was correct. The shunt could have fused at the beginning of the accident, in which case the locomotive could not have run. The other possibility was that the shunt fused during the accident.
Mineral affairs urged to employ more engineers

Renee Grawitzy (212)

The mineral and energy affairs department has urged the Public Service Commission to address the Leon commission's recommendations to employ more mine engineers and increase their pay.

Department mineral rights and management services chief director Jan Bredell said no response to the request had yet been received. Public Service Commission personnel said they would comment today.

Bredell said he hoped adequate funding would be made available by the time the new Mine Health and Safety Act came into effect, putting the department in a position to employ new personnel and create a "stable inspectorate." The department was asserting how large the inspectorate needed to be to function effectively. The Leon commission recommendation of 169 staffers could be too few.

Department sources have questioned whether the inspectorate will have sufficient financial and human resources to act as a proper enforcement agency. The department acted as a school for mining inspectors who eventually moved to the employ of mines, where they were better paid, Bredell said.

Leon commission chairman Judge Ramon Leon said yesterday the Cabinet had approved its recommendations and "therefore government must find the money" to fund the inspectorate properly.

The Leon commission noted that legislation was only one aspect of enforcement. "If the state does not provide an adequate enforcement agency, the value of good law and regulation is lost." The current inspectorate was drastically underfunded. Pay was "inadequate to attract candidates of the right quality in adequate numbers."

The R22m allocated to the state mining engineers' office was inadequate. The drafting committee presented its final proposals on draft mine health and safety legislation to the mining regulations advisory committee this week.

They provide for increased responsibility and duties of mine owners and managers, improved health and safety training, determining employees' rights, risk assessment and efficient administration.
Exam pass shock at mine

Despite being unable to read electrical diagrams, a Vaal Reefs underground electrician received a 100% pass on his examinations that qualified him as an electrician, the Leon Commission of Inquiry heard yesterday.

Frank Khoza revealed under cross-examination that he failed the examination because the invigilator gave him "booklets that had questions and answers." 

Khoza was appearing before the inquiry into the May 10 accident at Vaal Reefs' No 2 shaft in Orkney when 104 miners were killed when the locomotive fell down the shaft onto a double-storey man cage.

Asked by mine counsel Chris Loxton if he had cheated in the mine examinations, Khoza replied that he had not as "I would gain nothing by cheating." 

Sapa
Ingrid Salgado

A WORKER at Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft was instructed to backdate maintenance reports on the locomotive which plunged down the shaft on May 10, the joint inquest/enquiry into the disaster heard yesterday.

Frank Khosa said under cross-examination that his foreman, Louis le Roux, told him to write the reports after the 54B locomotive fell down the shaft.

The artisan job reports, submitted as evidence before the inquest/enquiry, indicated the locomotive was serviced on a weekly basis from March 15.

This included a report dated May 3, which showed the locomotive's logic card and shunt had been replaced, and a report dated May 10 indicating the locomotive was serviced on the day of the disaster.

Khosa identified the reports as the same he wrote shortly after the locomotive plunged down the shaft. He did not know the whereabouts of a report he had written originally on May 3.

Khosa said Le Roux had told him on the night of the disaster that the reports written prior to the locomotive's plunge were unsatisfactory. The foreman then told him to write new reports and backdate them while other mine personnel were sent to the mine "to see what had happened."

Khosa said Le Roux also instructed him to backdate reports about another locomotive, 26B. He said engineer Janne Bronkhorst and fitter foreman Okkie van Asweegen had been present when he received these instructions.

Khosa testified earlier that the shunt he replaced on the 54B locomotive on May 3 was second-hand. The locomotive also needed a new fuse but he was told there were none available.

He said Le Roux did not conduct routine spot checks on his work but checked when he had a chance.
by the SABC Board and the Co-ordinating Body referred to above.

In this regard, it must be noted that the SABC Board is a publicly accountable body, appointed by transparent and public process, which accounts both to the IBA and to Parliament on an annual basis.

Hon A E VAN NIEKERK: Mr President, arising out of the hon the Minister's reply, I want to ask, firstly, whether it means that an independent, successful corporation such as the Bop Broadcasting Corporation is going to lose its independence totally, and secondly, whether it means that it is now to be managed from Auckland Park.

The MINISTER FOR POSTS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND BROADCASTING: Mr President, the issue is the independence or otherwise of the Bop Broadcasting Corporation is not the issue in question here. What I am saying is that the IBA has recommended, on the strength of the understanding that Bop Broadcasting Corporation forms part of the national broadcasting system, that it should be integrated in a national broadcasting service.

Where it will be administered from remains to be seen. The headquarters of it will be in Auckland Park. They might be in Cape Town. They might be elsewhere. The national broadcasting services headquarters are going to be.

They might well be in Auckland Park, for that matter, but it means that the IBA has recommended that the Bop Broadcasting Corporation should be integrated, like the other TBVC broadcasters, with the SABC.

Incidentally, the IBA has also recommended that the name SABC be retained for that national broadcasting service.

Hon A E VAN NIEKERK: Mr President, further arising out of the hon the Minister's reply, will the province that established this broadcasting corporation be compensated in some way or the other for the take-over by the SABC?

The MINISTER: Mr President, with respect, I think that the hon Senator will remember that there was no province called the North West Province when the Bop Broadcasting Corporation was set up. In fact, there was a so-called independent Bantustan known as Bophuthatswana. That entity ceased to exist on 27 April 1994, so I do not see how the question arises. [Interruptions.]

For written reply

Compensatable diseases in mining: benefits payable

204 Sen A BALIE asked the Minister for Health:

(1) What benefits are payable in terms of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act, 1973 (Act No 78 of 1973), in respect of (a) compensatable diseases of the first and second degree, respectively, (b) compensatable diseases plus tuberculosis and (c) tuberculosis.

(2) whether any differentiation in this regard is made between (a) various categories of mineworkers and (b) members of different race groups in this regard, if not, what is the position in this regard, if so, what are the relevant details?

S4178

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH:

(1) All benefits are paid as lump sums in terms of the Act. Benefits are calculated according to a formula set out in section 80(2) of the Act. The formula is represented thus:

\[(A \times 12) \times B\]

In this formula, "A" represents the person's monthly earnings up to a maximum of R2 000 per month, and "B" is a factor by which the annual income is multiplied to arrive at the lump sum payment due to the claimant.

(a) In the case of compensatable disease in the first degree the factor is 1.31.

Maximum payment for first degree is thus R31 440.

(b) In the case of compensatable disease in the second degree the factor is 2.917.

Maximum payment for second degree is thus R70 008.

(c) Mineworkers suffering from tuberculosis are entitled to 75% of their loss of earnings while unfit to return to their normal duties, for a period of six months.

A benefit examination carried out at the conclusion of treatment will be classified as follows by the Certification Committee:

* no disability or a disability less than 10%—no compensation;
* disability more than 10% but less than 40%—first degree;
* disability greater than 40%—second degree

A minimum payment of R7 000 is stipulated in the Act.

(2) The short answer to this question is no. The amended Act makes no reference to race. The amendments were designed to remove reference to race throughout the Act. The regulations made in terms of the Act were not amended and still contain references to racial group. The regulations do not influence current practice. No regulations have been promulgated in terms of the Act since 1973.

The regulations governing health and safety in the mining industry are being rewritten by a tripartite group representing that state, organisations representing mineworkers and management organisations. This process is taking some time as many new matters have to be regulated. There will be no differentiation on grounds of race in the proposed regulations.
Leon probe hears of test 'cribbing'

JOHANNESBURG: Despite being unable to read electrical diagrams, a Vaal Reefs underground electrician received 100% pass on mine examinations that qualified him as an electrician, the Leon Commission of Inquiry heard yesterday.

Mr Frank Khoza said that no electricians failed the examination because the invigilator gave them "booklets that had questions and answers".

Mr Khoza was appearing before the inquiry into the accident in which 104 miners were killed on May 10.

Mr Justice Iramon Leon said he could not attach any importance to the mine test if answers were provided to the miners.

Sapa
**Locomotive driver ‘was crying hysterically’**

*Ingrid Salgado*

THE driver of the locomotive that plunged down Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft on May 10 had cried hysterically while trying to hit an emergency bell after the accident occurred, a witness yesterday told the joint inquest into the disaster in which 104 miners were killed.

Locomotive driver and guard Alfonso Motenekoane said he tried to console Jack Mpotha, who was “crying terribly, screaming I could read the shock in his eyes”. He initially thought Mpotha was going to jump into the shaft after the man in the carriage and locomotive Mpotha was running between the emergency bell and the shaft, trying to break the bell with a stick.

Motenekoane said he saw the man in the carriage bump against the shaft gate, push the gate’s rope and fall into the shaft. The 54B locomotive fell after it immediately.

He had seen Mpotha shortly before the accident while passing through the station area. Motenekoane was waiting to get to the mine’s surface at the end of the afternoon shift and was due to travel in the destroyed cage. He did not know what Mpotha was doing when he passed him.

He heard a great noise while waiting, got a fright, jumped up from where he was sitting and saw the man in the carriage and locomotive falling.

Motenekoane said he later left Mpotha near the shaft’s entrance and ran to alert other mine personnel about the accident. He believed he and Mpotha were the only witnesses.

Although he had not seen Mpotha jump off the locomotive, the driver had run towards him and hit the emergency bell shortly afterwards. Mpotha had told him that the locomotive ran away when he disconnected its Anderson plug. Motenekoane said...
Vaal Reefs train driver ‘offered cash to lie’

Renee Grawitzky

THE driver of locomotive 26B, that plunged down a mine shaft, claimed yesterday that an unknown man had offered him money or a car if he agreed to testify that he had checked locomotive 54B on the day of the accident. He said that he had not.

In a statement Mathe said that on the day of the accident he used 26B which he found in the station area in the right place before the “no entry” sign. The man carriage and locomotive 54B were also in the station area.

Supa reports that locomotive guard and driver Brown Koosaletse and Tsepano Mpotha, who was driving locomotive 54B on May 10, had informed a mine shift boss a day before that it was “not in good order.”

Koosaletse said on May 9 he and Mpotha had gone underground to work on locomotive 54B and he waited at the station while Mpotha went to check if the locomotive, which Mpotha said had been out of order, had been fixed. When Mpotha returned to say the locomotive was “still out of order”, the two men had told shift boss James Lang.

Koosaletse also concurred with Mpotha’s evidence that the shift boss had told them “as long as the locomotive was moving, continue using it.”

Koosaletse said Mpotha had pointed out, among other defects, that the locomotive’s hooter and front lights were not functioning. There had been no other locomotives for them to use.
Shift boss told of faulty locomotive

Front lights were not functioning, witness tells Leon inquiry

THE STAR / THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 14 1995
Inquiry hears differing
evidence on locos

Renee Gravitzky

THE joint inquiry into the Vaal Reefs mine
disaster heard differing evidence from witnesses yester-
day as to the location of locomotives 26B and 54B
on the afternoon shift of May 10, the day of the ac-
cident which killed 104 miners.

Locomotive driver James Mathe, employed as a
contract worker from Concor, said he parked loco-
mobile 26B at the cross-cut leading to the station on
the right side of the "no-entry" sign.

Cipriano Mathe, also of Concor, who worked
the afternoon shift on May 10 as loco guard for
Mathe, initially said in a statement that on the day of
the accident he had not used any locomotive. How-
ever, he said later he had used one locomotive but did
not know whether it was 26B or 54B as he had not
looked at the number.

During cross-examination, Hennie de Vos, for the
mineral and energy affairs department, presented
Mathe with a number of statements by witnesses
who at various times saw Concor workers using ei-
ther one or both of the locomotives in question.
Mathe said the people were either lying or were
trying to put the blame on Concor workers.

Pheelo Rambo, a driver of locomotive 26B on the
night shift on May 10, made two differing state-
ments. His initial statement said he found 26B
parked in the haulage close to the tip when he went
on duty. Later he said he saw his locomotive on the
station on the way to the charge bay. He removed the
locomotive from the station and drove it to the charge
bay. When he did this he was unaware of the accident
although he had heard a loud noise. During ques-
tioning he said he found loco 26B about 12 paces from
the shaft gates in the prohibited area.
Borrowing Bill will enable provinces to raise funds

Tim Cohen

CAPE TOWN — Provinces will soon be able to raise funds on the domestic capital markets, but legislation just published proposes to prohibit their access to derivative financial products and foreign capital markets.

The legislation also prohibits national government from guaranteeing domestic loans by provinces, and establishes a loan co-ordinating committee to ensure equity and "orderliness" in loan-raising programmes.

The intention of the legislation, tabled by the finance department at the weekend, is to create a legal framework within which provinces will be able to exploit their rights to raise loans.

The memorandum of the Borrowing Powers of Provincial Governments Bill states that it will endeavour to achieve equity in the distribution of loan funds among provincial governments.

While it is the long-term objective that the borrowing activities of provincial governments should to the greatest extent possible be subject to capital market scrutiny and discipline, this cannot be achieved by all provinces over the short to medium term.

The legislation consequently aimed to ensure successful entry into the domestic capital market by provincial governments by creating a mechanism, the loan co-ordinating committee, to ensure fair distribution of funds.

Since the constitution limited provinces' borrowing powers to raise loans for capital expenditure and for bridging finance, the legislation described these expenditures in terms of "generally accepted criteria".

Because the Bill needed to ensure that borrowing by provincial governments would be affordable, it provided that the amount of interest payable on the loans should not exceed a certain percentage of budgeted revenue. The percentage would be determined by Finance Minister Chris Liebenberg.

The Bill has been submitted to provincial governments, departments, the Financial and Fiscal Commission, the SA Reserve Bank and the World Bank.

The Bill is likely to be tabled in Parliament early next year.

Driver 'did not see the disaster'

Ingrid Salgado

JUDGE Ramon Leon warned a witness on Friday that he could be committing perjury at the joint inquest-inquiry into the deaths of 104 miners at Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft on May 10.

Locomotive driver Phelele Rantho, however, said he was telling the truth that he had not witnessed the disaster when locomotive 54B and a man carriage fell down No 2 shaft.

Rantho said he had been walking towards the mine's battery bay when he spotted his locomotive, 26B, parked in the station area. He had heard a loud noise and thought a pipe had burst.

He then removed 26B from the area after ensuring it was in working order.

Rantho said he had seen neither Jack Mpotha, the driver of the locomotive that plunged down the shaft, nor witness to the accident Alfonse Motemekoane.

Advocate Alec Freund, representing Mpotha, told Rantho it seemed unlikely he had seen Mpotha Motemekoane testified last week that a shocked Mpotha had run between the shaft entrance and an emergency bell after the accident.

Rantho denied he had removed 26B to ensure nobody would find the locomotive near the shaft.

Locomotive guard and driver Victor Cako testified on Friday that he had seen contract drivers using 54B. They had switched to using 26B upon his return.

Province to probe appointments

Ingrid Salgado

MPUMALANGA premier Matthews Phosa has announced the province will probe all procedures related to appointment of consultants and commissioners of inquiry.

Finance MEC Jacques Modipane would also probe authorisation processes and payment procedures for remunerating future commissioners and consultants.

This follows a probe into allegations that consultants to the provincial government, Eugene Nyati and Ntsako Mohapi, received excessive payment for their work. Phosa and Mpumalanga's future decisions needed to follow clearly defined policy guidelines.
Locomotive ‘could not fall under own steam’

Reene Grawitzky

THE locomotive which fell down Vaal Reefs’ No 2 shaft on May 10 could not have done so under its own power, as it was probable that its shunt had burnt out before the accident occurred.

This position was presented at a joint inquest and inquiry yesterday by Rand Afrikaans University’s Mike Case, who conducted tests at the weekend on a locomotive to establish its performance in a situation where various safety devices were inoperative.

He said an important aspect of the tests was determining “the conditions under which the current shunt would fuse whilst installed in the loco”.

Case said he was “morally certain” the shunt had fused before the accident. He said the shunt would not fuse if the wheels of the locomotive were rotating but would do so if the wheels were locked. The wheels would be locked either by applying the brakes to the fullest extent or by locking them in any other mechanical way.

Case said he felt that the locomotive could not have moved under its own power. Judge Ramon Leon asked if it could have been pushed.

Case said it could have been pushed otherwise moved.

The view presented by Case contrasted sharply with locomotive driver Tsepang Mpolo’s statement. He said “As soon as I plugged the plug in, the loco shot off in the direction of the shaft. I immediately tried to put the loco in reverse to get it to go backwards but it carried on going forward. I then tried to tighten the brakes but nothing happened.”

Alec Freund, representing the driver, asked Case what his objective was in the recent tests. Case said he had had questions about the conditions necessary for a shunt to fuse.
Vaal Reefs checklist 'was ignored'

Renee Gratzky

THE driver of the locomotive which plunged down Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft on May 10 killing 104 miners yesterday told the inquest inquiry into the disaster that his supervisor had ignored a checklist indicating a device which prevented it from moving was missing.

Tsopang Mpotha said that on three separate occasions he had presented the checklist to his supervisor indicating the skid-spragg, normally attached to the locomotive to prevent it from sliding forward or backward, was missing. He said the supervisor had refused to sign it.

Evidence was also presented by Mpotha that the day before the accident, on May 9, he had difficulties with the locomotive which he allegedly reported to his shift boss.

Alec Freund, representing Mpotha, said evidence during the inquiry had implied that black and white workers did not go underground in the lift together. Mpotha said black workers went down separately and white supervisors came underground 30 minutes after the black workers.

Mpotha said on the night of the accident he had gone down in the first lift.

Freund referred to the shift boss's statement which indicated that no-one had reported to him that locomotive 54B "was not in a good condition."

Mpotha said this was incorrect.
Killer locomotive faulty, says driver

BY JUSTICE MALALA

The underground locomotive which went through several safety devices and plunged on top of a cage killing 104 mineworkers at the Vaal Reefs Mine on May 10, was faulty on the night before the accident, it was claimed yesterday.

The claim was made by the locomotive driver and sole survivor of the accident, Tsepang Mpoti, who said he had found on the night of May 9 that the locomotive would move forward only a short distance before stopping.

Speaking at the Vaal Reefs Commission of Inquiry into the disaster, in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, Mpoti yesterday began giving evidence at the joint inquest-inquiry about what happened that night in the mine's Number 2 Shaft.

Mpoti said when he found there was a fault with the locomotive he reported the matter to the "engineer person on duty."

The particular individual had said someone would come to check on the fault.

Mpoti said he had also reported the fault to James Lang, the shift boss on duty on the night of the accident.

Tsepang Mpoti ... at the commission of inquiry yesterday.

PICTURE: JODI BIEBER

"It was put to Mpoti that Lang had earlier testified that no one had reported the fault to him."

"He is lying," Mpoti said.

Mpoti testified he had, in the two months he had been working in the mine's Level 56, where the accident occurred, pointed out to Lang that the skits spray - a device used to stop theD parked locomotive from moving - was missing.

The first time he had report-
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHANNESBURG: The underground locomotive, which went through several safety devices and plunged on top of a man cage killing 104 mineworkers at the Vaal Reefs mine on May 10, was faulty on the night before the accident.

Speaking at the Vaal Reefs Commission of Inquiry into the disaster in Bramfontein, the locomotive driver and sole survivor of the horrific accident, Mr Tsepang Mpota, said he had found on May 9 that the locomotive would move forward only a short distance before stopping.

Mr Mpota said he reported the matter to the "engineering person" on duty, who said someone would come to check on the fault. Mr Mpota said he had also reported the fault to Mr James Lang, the shift boss on duty on the night of the accident.

Counsel for the National Union of Mineworkers Mr Karel Tip put it to Mr Mpota that Mr Lang had earlier testified that no one had reported the fault to him.

"He is lying," Mr Mpota said in Seboho.

He said he had pointed out to Mr Lang that a device used to stop the parked locomotive from moving was missing. Lawyers will continue cross-examination today.
Warning before tragedy ‘ignored’

By Abdul Milazi
Labour Reporter

The driver of the locomotive that killed 104 miners at Vaal Reefs Mine near Orkney in the Free State three months ago reported defects to the locomotive on three occasions before the accident, but the warnings were ignored by the mine shift supervisor.

Mr Tsepang Mpota was testifying before the Leon Commission of Inquiry into the accident.

Mpota said he had also told his shift supervisor, Mr James Lang, the night before the accident that the locomotive’s brakes, control mechanism, hooter and lights were not working.

He told the inquiry that on one occasion he was told that if the locomotive could move he should go back to work.

Lang allegedly ordered him to go back to work when he reported the faults on the night of May 9, before the accident.

Falling locomotive

The 104 miners were killed on May 10 when a lift cage in which they were travelling was hit by a falling locomotive, sending it plummeting to the bottom of the shaft.

Mpota said he had not submitted his checklist of defects to the mine supervisor for two months, but nobody had asked him for it.

This is a strong requirement in terms of the mine’s safety regulations.

The inquiry heard that black and white workers travelled in separate lift cages.

The one that was crushed by the locomotive carried only black workers.

In an affidavit, Lang, who was the shift supervisor at the time of the accident, claimed that nobody had reported a defective locomotive to him on May 9.

Mpota maintained that he did.

Earlier, Vaal Reefs health and safety coordinator Mr Robert Proudfoot told the inquiry that mine regulations required that the driver of the locomotive should not operate it without an assistant.
State doubts locomotive was properly checked

Ingrid Salgado

THE driver of the locomotive that plunged down Vale Reefs' No 2 shaft on May 10, said yesterday that he had performed at least 13 checks on the locomotive immediately prior to the accident.

Tsengang Mphothe told the joint inquest-inquiry into the disaster in which 104 miners were killed, that he had removed a chain attaching locomotive 54B to another locomotive, 26B. He had started checking 54B by fastening its brakes.

However, Rigel de Vries, representing the state, told Mphothe it was "impossible" that he checked 54B to the extent he described.

Evidence submitted showed that the cage in which Mphothe travelled underground had landed at 56 level at 20h13 while the emergency bell, which Mphothe rang, was activated at 20h16.

Judge Ramon Leon said it would have taken Mphothe at least 10 minutes to walk from the cage to the station area where 54B was parked.

Mphothe said the locomotive had jumped away after he inserted its Anderson plug. He got a fright, attempted to reverse 54B and tried to tighten the handbrake. However, the locomotive continued moving towards the shaft. It took a long time for 54B's brakes to work after they were applied. The locomotive had been that way since he started driving it three weeks prior to the accident. He had reported this to his shift boss, James Lang.
Vaal Reefs driver talks

'The locomotive that crushed on the carriage carrying miners moved by itself'

Sowetan Correspondent

THE DRIVER of the underground locomotive that crushed 104 miners to death in Vha Reefs Mine's number 2 shaft on May 10 said yesterday the handbrake and a lever that was supposed to stop the locomotive failed to operate on the night of the accident.

Mr Tsopang Mqota (30) yesterday described in the inquest into the disaster the last moments before the accident, saying the locomotive started moving off at great speed of its own accord before it was started properly.

Mr Mqota said when he arrived on Level 56 on the evening of May 10 he had found that his locomotive, another locomotive and a seven-metre long carriage were inside the shaft station, where they were not supposed to be.

After checking that his locomotive was fine he boarded it and tried to plug in the battery cable onto the locomotive.

"When I put in the plug the locomotive suddenly moved off at great speed. I did not expect it to move towards the shaft," he said.

He described how it knocked the main carriage, which was standing on the same rail track in front of it, three times.

"I did not expect such a thing to happen and I was very frightened. I tried to use the brakes and then the lever on the control panel to make it move backwards, but it kept on moving. I tried the handbrake again, but it did not move," he said in answer to questions by his counsel, Advocate Alec Freund.

He said the locomotive jumped over a tank trap—a safety device on the rail tracks—and he decided to jump off.

"When the lever and the handbrake did not work, I put my hands on my head and said 'Oh, God!' and jumped off. I hit my head against the station platform as I jumped off. After jumping off I moved towards the Mangan cross-cut.

"I thought it would be better to ring the alarm. I found a stick near the alarm and broke the glass covering it, and hit it.

"Just before hitting the alarm I saw that my locomotive was falling into the shaft. To be truthful, I did not hear the alarm bell ringing after hitting it," he said, in response to a question by State counsel Mr Regal du Toit.

"There was a big noise when the locomotive went down the shaft. I thought it was the sound of bursting pipes," Mqota said.
'It moved off at great speed'

Mine loco driver tells his story

BY JUSTICE MALALA

The driver of the underground locomotive that crushed 104 miners to death in Vaal Reefs' No 2 shaft on May 10, described yesterday the chain of events that led to the disaster.

Teepang Mposa (30) said the handbrake and a lever which were supposed to stop the locomotive failed to operate on the night of the accident.

He said that when he arrived on Level 56 on the evening of May 10 he found that his locomotive, another locomotive and a 7m-long carriage were inside the shaft station, where they were not supposed to be.

After checking that his locomotive was fine he boarded it and tried to plug in the battery cable.

"When I put in the plug the locomotive suddenly moved off at great speed. I did not expect it to move towards the shaft," he said.

"I was very frightened. I tried to use the brakes and then the lever on the control panel to make it move backwards, but it kept on moving," he said in answer to questions by his counsel, Advocate Alec Freund.

He said the locomotive jumped over a tank trap - a safety device on the rail tracks.

"When the lever and the handbrake did not work I put my hands on my head and said 'Oh, Almighty!' and jumped off."

"I thought it would be better to ring the alarm. I found a stick near the alarm and broke the glass covering it, and hit it."

"Just before hitting the alarm I saw that (my locomotive) was falling into the shaft."

"To be truthful, I did not hear the alarm bell ringing after hitting it," he said, in response to a question by State Counsel Hugel du Toit.

By the time he reached the bottom, Mposa said, the locomotive had plunged into the shaft.

"There was a big noise when the locomotive went down the shaft. I thought it was the sound of bursting pipes."

"There was no one in the vicinity."

The first time I noticed a person was when I saw someone looking in the direction of the shaft. I saw that it was (locomotive driver and guard Alfonso) Motsokoana."

Mposa said that in the weeks before the accident his locomotive did not have the unique magnetic key that is used to operate the locomotives.

In the three weeks that he had been driving the locomotive, he had found that its brakes were not working, and he had reported the matter to his superior.

Mposa said he did not agree with some parts of two statements taken from him by a mine security officer and the police on the day after the accident and on May 17.

He said that while giving the statements he "could not understand himself clearly."
Miners' deaths: Brake failed, driver tells court

JOHANNESBURG: The driver of the under- and locomotive that crushed 104 miners to death in Vaal Reef mine's No 2 shaft said the handbrake and a lever that was supposed to stop the locomotive failed to operate on the night of the accident.

Mr Tseang Mposta, 30, was testifying before the inquest into the disaster on May 10. The locomotive had moved off at great speed before it was started properly, he said. When he boarded the locomotive at the start of his shift he had plugged in the battery cable.

"When I put in the plug the locomotive suddenly moved off at great speed. I did not expect it to move towards the shaft," he said.

He described how it knocked a carriage, used to transport workers, that was standing on the same track in front of it, three times.

"I did not expect such a thing to happen and I was very frightened. I tried to use the brakes and then the lever on the control panel to make it move backwards, but it kept on moving. I tried the handbrake again, but it did not move.

When the locomotive jumped over a tank trap, a safety device on the rail tracks, he jumped off and ran to set off an alarm.

The hearing continues.

CAPE NEWS PAPERS

THE INTERNET

A SPECIAL SURVEY IN THE CAPE TIMES, SEPTEMBER 29, 1995

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PUBLICATION DATE:
SEPTEMBER 28, 1995
SPACE BOOKING DEADLINE:

[SOURCE: Cape Times, July 10, 1995]
THE driver of the locomotive that fell down Vaal Reefs No 2 shaft on May 10 said yesterday he had not unplugged a gadget on the runaway locomotive because he was “governed by fear”.

Under cross-examination by advocate Chris Loxton, representing Vaal Reefs, Tsengang Mpotha said he had not thought about pulling out locomotive 54B’s Anderson plug. He said the plug had been within easy reach.

Mpotha was testifying at the inquest inquiry into the disaster in which 104 miners were killed when the locomotive and a man carriage plunged down the shaft.

Mpotha testified earlier that 54B had jumped in the direction of the shaft when he inserted the Anderson plug.

Mpotha said he was frightened and was not thinking in the same way that Loxton was putting the argument across. He instead tried to reverse the locomotive, but this did not work.

He denied he failed to pull the plug because he was not in 54B or that he had inserted it while standing outside the locomotive.

Mpotha said that while checking 54B prior to the accident, he shook a gadget linked to the locomotive’s brake shoes. It was stiff, which meant the brakes were fully on.

Mpotha said he jumped off the runaway locomotive near the shaft gate after 54B bumped the man carriage in front of it. He watched the locomotive plunge down the shaft.

Earlier yesterday, Mpotha alleged that his shift boss, James Lang, had assaulted him twice. One assault occurred after he asked Lang for a safety device, Mpotha said.

However, G. Ackerman, representing the Underground Officials’ Association, said Lang would deny this when he testified.

Business Day reported yesterday that Mr. Justice Ramon Leon estimated it would have taken at least 10 minutes for Mpotha to walk from an underground cage to the station area where 54B was parked. The estimate in fact included the time taken for Mpotha to have checked his locomotive before inserting 54B’s Anderson plug. Business Day regrets the omission.
Driver of locomotive blames faulty brakes

‘All he had to do was pull a plug’

BY JUSTICE MALALA

The driver of the locomotive that crashed 104 miners to death at Vaal Reefs Mine on May 10 failed to pull out a plug which would have stopped the runaway locomotive because he was not inside it when it started moving, it was suggested yesterday.

In his cross-examination of locomotive driver Temang Mpotla, counsel for mine-owners Anglo American Chris Loxton, SC, said it was the most natural thing that when Mpotla saw that the plug activated the locomotive he should have pulled it out.

“Did not come to my mind to pull out the plug. I was frightened. It was not as simple as you put it,” Mpotla said.

He said he had not put in the plug while standing outside the locomotive as Loxton suggested.

He said when he got on to the locomotive and put in the plug it had moved off at great speed of its own accord.

Mpotla was speaking at the joint inquest/inquiry into the disaster being held in Brakfontein, Johannesburg.

Loxton said Mpotla’s version of events on the night of the accident “is irreconcilable” with that of Alfonsus Mphangwe, the sole witness to the accident. He suggested that if Mpotla had jumped off the locomotive at the point he says – when he realised he could not stop it – he would have fallen “practically” at the feet of Motelekaneleane.

“The difficulty I have with Mpotla’s version is that Motelekaneleane saw the locomotive and man carriage go down (the shaft), then within 30 seconds he saw you come running,” he said.

Loxton said there were some very puzzling aspects of Mpotla’s evidence and he did not know which aspects were the truth.

Counsel for the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Henrie de Voe, put it to Mpotla that he did not check the brakes of the locomotive on the night of the accident. Had he done so there would have been no accident.

Statements put to the inquiry by at least three witnesses, and the driver who had used the locomotive on the shift before Mpotla, showed that the brakes were in good condition on May 10.

Mpotla said the brakes were faulty and had been so since he had started using the locomotive three weeks before the accident.

Mpotla said he had reported this on several occasions but his superior, James Lang, had pushed him away once and hit him on the knee on another occasion, saying he should go back to work. Lang’s lawyer said Lang denied these allegations.

Presented with job request forms showing that requests had been made by Lang to have the plugs and the brakes of the locomotive fixed, Mpotla said as far as he knew the locomotive’s brakes were not working on May 10.
I was assaulted twice by shift boss.
Miner breached safety regulations, inquiry told

Johannesburg miner Tsepang Maphela breached mine safety regulations when he used a faulty locomotive on the night of May 10 when 104 of his colleagues perished, the Leon Commission of Inquiry heard yesterday.

It has been probing the circumstances that led to the locomotive’s fall down a vertical shaft at Vaal Reefs gold mine at Orkney, on to a double-storey lift, crushing 104 mineworkers being ferried underground.

Under cross-examination by assessor A McKenzie, Maphela confirmed he had received safety instructions not to use a faulty locomotive.

In his previous evidence, Maphela had testified that his locomotive was defective before the accident.

Despite its state, he said he had used it because, whenever he asked for parts, his shift boss, James Lang, would not give him any, adding that union representatives “did not have the power” to overrule a supervisor.

Asked McKenzie “Mr Maphela, were you ever at any time instructed not to use a locomotive if it is faulty?”

Maphela: “Yes, I was .”

The commission was adjourned to October 30 — Sapa

Star 23/9/95
5 miners die in gas blast

JOHANNESBURG. — Five miners died and seven were injured by a methane gas explosion at Elandsrand gold mine near Carletonville today.

An Anglo American spokesman said four of the injured men were receiving special treatment for burns — Reuter
Mine blast - 4 killed

Four miners were killed and eight others injured in an underground explosion at Elandsrand Gold Mine in Carletonville early today. James Dumesa, a spokesman for mine managers Anglo American Corp of South Africa, has so far confirmed the four deaths and eight injuries, saying a full statement would be issued shortly.

12/128 for 7/9/95
Probe into methane explosion at mine

BY MANDLA MTYEBU

An investigation into the methane gas explosion which claimed five lives and left seven people injured at the Elandsrand Gold Mine in Carletonville on Tuesday night has already begun.

Representatives from the Mineral and Energy Department, National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and mine management, said there had been a strong smell of gas in the mine's ventilation system.

The area, which was closed off to production, was later declared safe after a thorough inspection. However, the investigation into the cause of the explosion continues.

The four critically injured workers were transferred to Johannesburg's Rand Mutual Hospital for specialist treatment in the burn unit.

Another three workers are recovering at the Western Deep Levels (WDL) Hospital after suffering burns during the explosion at Level 88 (about 2,500m below the surface) on Tuesday.

Speaking from the WDL hospital bed, miner Mthethenzi Selam, who sustained facial and body burns, said there had been a "funny smell" as they boarded a lift to go underground.

He said several workers had complained about the smell to their supervisor who "told us to continue with our work." He added that they had difficulty working with that smell, then there was a huge blast, and the area plunged into darkness, he said.
Dump truck kills four Kinross mine workers

FOUR mine workers were killed and four injured yesterday at the Kinross Gold Mine in Mpumalanga when a dump truck rode over its driver and ploughed into a group of workers.

Gengold's Andrew Davidson said the dump unit was being used 1 600m below the surface. The vehicle, the size of a large lorry, ran over the driver and killed him after he fell off, and it then continued another 60m into a small group of mine workers.

A full inquiry into the accident would be launched by mine management and the mineral and energy affairs department.
THE locomotive which plunged down Vaal Reef's No 2 shaft on May 10 had been smoking on the afternoon of the accident, the joint inquest-inquiry into the disaster that killed 104 miners heard yesterday.

The inquiry resumed after more than a month's adjournment, with ANC secretary-general and former NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa attending for the first time yesterday. His former assistant, Marcel Golding, was also present.

Acting crew supervisor Fernando Mucovate identified that employees of independent contractor Concor — using locomotive 54B on May 10 — told him smoke was coming out of the locomotive's control unit. They also said they would fetch another locomotive, 26B, because of 54B's condition. He did not know the contractors, and had not seen the smoke.

The inquiry heard that locomotive driver Victor Cako had failed to place a shunt bar under the wheels of 54B when he attempted to stop it that afternoon. The safety device was to act as a brake when the locomotive was switched off.

Cako said the locomotive had been moving fast. He unplugged its Anderson Plug when it came to a stop, and there was a spark. He had not reported this to his supervisors because he was not 54B's driver and it was therefore not his job to do so.
Engineer ‘advised’ of death train defect

Renee Grawitzky

ON the night a locomotive fell down Vaal Reefs Mine’s No 2 shaft, the general engineering supervisor had been advised that it was not in good condition, but failed to mention this in his statement or notify the mining inspectorate, a joint inquest-inquiry heard yesterday.

The joint inquest-inquiry is investigating the disaster in which 104 people were killed when a locomotive fell down a shaft and landed on a man cage on May 10.

Questioned by Karl Tip for the National Union of Mineworkers, supervisor Henry Peens said he had been advised that night by Frank Khoza, the electrician responsible for fixing the locomotive on the day of the accident.

Khoza told him that certain components of the locomotive 84B had been bridged out and that the locomotive was not in a good condition. During earlier evidence Khoza claimed he was not qualified to fix the locomotive.

Peens said he approached Khoza two days after the accident to clarify what he had told him on the night of the accident. After Khoza had repeated his earlier comments, Peens said: “Do you realise you are responsible for the deaths of 104 people?”

Peens said he had been in a state of shock when he said this, and he had apologised to Khoza.

He had, Peens said, only advised his immediate supervisor that Khoza had informed him of the state of the locomotive. Peens said he had made no reference to this information beforehand because he had mentioned it to his boss.

During earlier proceedings, Tip listed a number of accidents where locomotives had fallen down Vaal Reefs mine shafts.

Tip referred Peens to an accident which occurred in July 1992 at No 2 shaft when four material cars, pushed by a locomotive, fell down the shaft.

Peens had been involved in the investigation of this accident and made a number of recommendations including getting an additional “tank pit or booms installed on all stations”.

Asked if his recommendations had been implemented, Peens said certain short-term recommendations had been implemented immediately but he could not testify on long-term recommendations.
‘Inspectors weren’t told of loco’s safety defect’

By Adam Cooke

Two senior management officials were told of a faulty safety mechanism on the locomotive that killed 104 miners at Vaal Reefs gold mine earlier this year, but they did not later pass this on to government inspectors, an inquest was told yesterday.

Testifying at the inquest into the disaster, No 2 shaft general engineering manager Henry James Peens said that little had been done to rectify shortfalls in safety mechanisms at the shaft after a similar accident in July 1992.

The inquest is hearing evidence on the May 10 disaster at Orkney in North West which saw the miners fall to their deaths when a locomotive went out of control and plunged down No 2 shaft.

Peens said he had told section engineer Carel Norval during a midnight meeting a few hours after this year’s disaster that makeshaft repairs which were not foolproof had been made to the safety system on the locomotive. He said he had expressed his concern during the meeting that the makeshaft repairs could have been the cause of the accident.

But Peens admitted under cross-examination that he had not disclosed this information during his statement after the disaster.

He said he had been told after the disaster by electrician Frank Khora that “the locomotive was not in good condition. There are components that are bridged out.”

Peens made a number of recommendations in his accident report after the first accident in 1992, one of which stated that a “second additional trackpad or booms” should be installed on all stations. These had still not been implemented by the time of the accident this year.

However, a stopblock, used to prevent the rolling stock from being pushed down the shaft, had been installed. But the mechanism could restrain only a locomotive pushed by hand.

The locomotive at the time of the accident was power driven, thus proving that the mine could not claim ignorance in the affair, he said.
Safety our priority, probe told

BY ADAM COOKS

Miner management at Vaal Reefs mine near Orkney was questioned yesterday, during the inquest/inquiry into the disaster there earlier this year, on whether it was driven by profit or by safety concerns.

And a vital document – a checklist specifying the condition of the locomotive that plunged down No 2 shaft on May 10, landed on a man cage and killed all 104 of its occupants – has not been traced.

Mathius van Rensburg, shaft engineer at No 2 shaft, was yesterday asked by state counsel R du Tore why more of the mine’s substantial budget was not allocated to safety.

Van Rensburg said safety was the mine’s priority and production was secondary. However, because he was the only engineer at the shaft, he had to rely on his colleagues to ensure certain recommendations and safety procedures were implemented.

After a similar accident when a locomotive fell down a shaft in 1992, certain safety measures were improved upon, including the installation of a stop block – a mechanism used to prevent rolling stock from being pushed down the shaft.

But Van Rensburg admitted that the precaution had not been through “dynamic tests” to see if it could halt a power-driven locomotive. The locomotive, 54B, had been powered down on the night of May 10.

Van Rensburg also said he did not know of any safety drill at any mine that was foolproof.

Earlier in the day, the probe heard from advocate Chris Luxton, for Vaal Reefs, that a vital checklist could not be traced. It is meant to carry observations made by the driver of 54B on the locomotive’s condition. The driver, Tshaping Mpotha, testified earlier that 54B was faulty.

Mr Justice Ramon Leon warned the media to report accurately on the proceedings, after a number of queries were raised.
Rockfall kills 2 miners

Two miners died and three were injured yesterday in a rockfall at Western Deep Levels' South Mine near Carletonville in western Gauteng. Mine owners Anglo American said in a statement the rockfall followed a seismic event at 10:20am which measured 0.9 on the Richter scale.

The injured were in a satisfactory condition in hospital. The names of the deceased would be withheld until their next of kin had been informed, the statement said. — SAPA.
Arsenic powder at New Consort mine 'lethal'

BARRERON — Tons of lethal arsenic powder were being stored in ruptured low-grade bags at a gold mine near Barberton, Mpumalanga, National Union of Mineworkers lawyer Richard Spoor said yesterday.

Investigators from the department of health confirmed the fine, wind-blow arsenic dust had contaminated grounds within a 3km radius of Anglovaal's New Consort gold mine, African Eye News Service reported.

Spoor said residents in the area complained regularly about skin rashes and ran a great risk of suffering respiratory tract cancer.

The arsenic acid was being stored in low-grade packaging not meant for the lethal poison but merely for its transportation.

Strict regulations in the US prescribed arsenic had to be perfectly sealed in high-grade packaging and then put in secondary containers for transport. "But at New Consort mine the bags have ruptured and the arsenic is exposed to rain, wind and sun and is being blown everywhere.

Spoor said mine management had admitted it did not know how to dispose of the arsenic.

The masks that the workers have to wear are not at all suitable to filter out the dust.

The mine is being investigated by mining, government and union officials after high concentrations of arsenic trioxide were found in the community's drinking water on October 26.

Anglovaal declined to comment on the issue until investigations were completed.

Investigations by the departments of environment, health, mineral and energy affairs, and water were expected to be completed by mid-December — Sapa
Arsenic in water ‘claims first victim’

Sharon Hammond
and Hazel Friedman

FOUR years after a high concentration of arsenic was first found in drinking water at Angloyvall’s New Consort gold mine in Barberton, Mpumalanga, the poison is alleged to have claimed its first victim.

An investigation into the mine started recently after 2 000 residents were poisoned by drinking water in October. The Weekly Mail first exposed poisoning in 1991.

Amos Manzani, a 38-year-old underground mine supervisor, died after complaining of severe stomach pains last Tuesday. And Richard Spoer, legal representative for the National Union of Mineworkers, said two children also possibly died as a result of the poisoning, but that this has not yet been confirmed.

Once absorbed by the body, Spoer said, arsenic was retained and built up until it reached a lethal dosage.

A district surgeon has performed a post-mortem on Manzani, but the result will only be known in a few weeks. Angloyvall representative Julian Gwillim said the mine had no medical records of Manzani complaining about stomach aches or headaches and that he could have died of natural causes. He would not comment on government and mine investigations into the poisonings until they were complete.

Spoer said most of the mining residents complained of numb fingertips and toes, stomach pains, headaches, muscle weakness, diarrhoea and skin rashes, and that there were increased chances of respiratory and other forms of cancer.

At the end of October, the drought forced residents to get their drinking water from boreholes, but arsenic levels as high as 0,7mg per litre were found by mine officials. The legal limit in South is 0,3mg per litre, while in the United States it is 0,1mg.

“The river feeding the mine is flowing again since the rains, and arsenic measurements in the water supply are now 0,2mg,” said Spoer.

But he warns the poisoned water supply is not as much of a problem as are the several hundred tons of raw arsenic powder being stored out in the open at the mine in ruptured, low-grade packaging. Arsenic is a by-product of gold mining in the region.

Meanwhile, workers at a Boksburg subsidiary of industrial giant Barlow Rand say they are being harassed by management after the Mail & Guardian last week exposed a serious health hazard at the factory.

The M&G published details of a confidential occupational health survey which warned management at the Boksburg factory of Barlows Cat of the dangers to workers from poisonous particles emitted during welding operations. The report, completed in May, recommended extensive protective measures. But worker sources claimed management had ignored the report because safety measures were too costly.

This week, 23 workers were ordered to appear before a company disciplinary inquiry. Many are welders who had displayed skin rashes to the M&G, complaining of pain, lethargy and a foul nasal discharge.

The disposal of arsenic first was, until the late 1970s, considered so dangerous that prison labourers from Barberton were forced to do the job.

Investigations by the Mpumalanga department of health, mineral and energy affairs, and water affairs are expected to be completed in mid-December.
Disaster widows hit by mine pensions rip-off

By PETER De IONNO

THE Vaal Reefs disaster, the worst mining accident in South Africa, has robbed a 26-year-old widow of her mining pension, according to the Chamber of Mines. The widow, who was one of the 690 miners killed in the disaster, had been employed at the mine for 10 years and had a mining pension of R500 a month. The government has refused to pay her pension, despite the fact that she was a legal beneficiary under the terms of the pension scheme.

The widow's husband, also a miner, had died in an accident at the mine two years ago. The couple had no children and lived in a small flat in Johannesburg. The government has said it would not pay the widow's pension because she was not a legal beneficiary under the terms of the pension scheme.

The widow's family is currently living in poverty and has been unable to afford basic necessities. They have been forced to sell their belongings to survive and are now homeless.

The government has been under pressure to pay the widow's pension, but it has refused to do so. The widow's family has appealed to the government to change its policy and pay her pension, but they have been unsuccessful.

The widow's story is just one of many in South Africa. Many families of miners who have died in accidents have been forced to live in poverty and have been unable to afford basic necessities.

The government has been criticized for its failure to address the issue of pension payments to the families of miners who have died in accidents. The government has said that it will not pay pensions to the families of miners who die in accidents unless they are legal beneficiaries under the terms of the pension scheme.
Government angry over big mine scam

By Khangale Makhado

A GOVERNMENT delegation is soon to meet Mozambican representatives following reports at the weekend alleging that families of mine disaster victims had been fleeced or swindled of millions of rands.

Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs Mr Pik Botha said in a statement yesterday that the Government viewed the media reports in "a serious light."

He said if they were correct, the Government would have to urgently take the matter up with Mozambique.

It was reported in a Sunday newspaper yesterday that there was a scam which robbed families of victims who had worked on South African mines.

This follows an agreement in 1964 between the then Portuguese government and South Africa.

The scam was cracked after the Mozambican families of eight victims of the Vaal Reefs mine disaster in which 104 miners died failed to receive their compensation of about R60 000 each.

The agreement stipulated that all compensation and death or disability pensions due to migrant mine workers had to be paid through the country's labour department.

Botha said that while he believed the original agreement was based on the sound and well-intended principle of ensuring that families and dependents received the benefits, he was concerned that they were instead cheated of such benefits.

"We must ensure that the families do in practice receive the benefits due to them, so that widows can sustain themselves and that children can be properly cared for," Botha said.

He said he would request Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Alfred Nzo to take up the matter with the Mozambican government.
Probe into miners' pay scam

BY JUSTICE MALALA
Labour Reporter

High-level talks between South Africa and Mozambique will begin next month to try and end a suspected 21-year scam that may have robbed thousands of Mozambican miners of millions of rand.

The Chamber of Mines and the National Union of Mineworkers have expressed their outrage over the suspected scam.

NUM secretary-general Kgalema Motlanthe said yesterday the agreement whereby benefits were paid to Mozambican miners via that country's officials should be scrapped or reviewed.

Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pako Botha said he would be approaching Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo urgently to take up the matter with the Mozambican government.

Pay scam probe

The alleged scam, in which disrupt Mozambican government officials could have stolen benefits meant for workers crippled in South African mines or for the families of those killed, was discovered when officials of the Vaal Reefs disaster fund visited eight Mozambican families whose relatives were killed in the recent mine disaster.

The families had still not received benefits due to them.

"Some workers who were meant to receive up to R1,000 a month were paid the equivalent of R1. There are such pathetic cases, it is unbelievable," Botha said.
Government acts on mine scam

By Abdul Milazi
Labour Reporter

MINISTER OF MINERAL and Energy Affairs Mr Pek Botha yesterday called for all transfers of insurance and pension money to Mozambique to be temporarily stopped while South Africa and that country discuss the current indemnities scam under which miners have allegedly been robbed by their government for 21 years.

Botha's call comes after media reports that Mozambican government officials pocketed millions of rand in insurance and pension payouts owed to that country's migrant workers.

The two governments are to meet at an unspecified date next month to try to resolve the matter.

Botha said South Africa might have to review or cancel the 1964 agreement between the two countries under which pension, insurance and other benefits were paid to Mozambique's department of labour, which in turn paid families of the victims of mine accidents.

"This law was intended to protect families of mineworkers from that country. It was aimed at ensuring that their families received indemnities. It is ironic that the opposite is happening," said Botha.

The scam was discovered after insurance investigators recently found that families of eight victims of the May 10 Vaal Reefs Mine disaster near Orkney, Free State, received no payments.

At least 104 mineworkers were killed when a runaway locomotive fell on to a lift cage carrying workers, sending it plummeting to the bottom of the 2 103 metre deep shaft.

Most of the victims were from Lesotho, while others came from Mozambique, Swaziland and the Eastern Cape.

A mass funeral, attended by high-ranking politicans, union officials and the clergy, was held in Orkney where the mangled bodies were buried.

A total of R10 million was pledged by both the mine management and Government to help alleviate the plight of the families left behind.

Mine officials discovered that families of eight of the victims from Mozambique had not received a single payment since May this year, while another family had been paid the equivalent of R1.

Insurance investigators also found that 1 000 other families had been robbed by the Mozambican government for 21 years.

This comes after scores of Mozambicans, who have been in this country for years, could qualify for permanent residence in what was seen as a victory for the National Union of Mineworkers NUM has continually fought for black migrant workers to be given the same rights as their white counterparts who received full citizenship after five years as stipulated by the Aliens Control Act.
Mineworker dies as piece of metal pierces carriage

BY TAMSEN DE BEER

A mineworker died and another was injured at JCI's Randfontein Estate gold mine when a piece of metal struck a man-cage carrying 75 workers.

Yesterday's incident comes only a week after the mine achieved 2 million consecutive fatality-free shifts.

Chief executive for JCI gold division John Brownegg said a thin steel plate was dislodged and fell down the shaft after being struck by a rockwander at 2.45pm yesterday.

He said a three-deck man-cage lifting about 75 workers out of the mine at the end of their shift had been damaged by the plate which knocked a hole in the uppermost deck.

One man was killed and another admitted to the mine's medical centre with broken legs.

Brownegg said the Inspector of Mines and National Union of Mineworkers representatives visited the scene yesterday.

He said the last accident at the mine occurred in April, when one man died.
Miner's death breaks long safety record

A miner worker died and another was injured in an accident at a Johannesburg Consolidated Investment gold mine on Thursday, the company said yesterday.

A spokesman said the accident at Randfontein Estates Gold Mining Company Witwatersrand Ltd was serious in the light of the 2 million accident-free shifts at the mine.

There had been no upset in production, the spokesman said.

National Union of Mineworkers health and safety co-ordinator Fleur Pimper said in a statement: "People need to be safety aware at all times.

"This accident highlights the need for the industry to embark on a risk management programme as soon as possible and to start implementing the proposed Health and Safety Bill now."

Reuters
Search for miners continues

By Matthew Buckland

The search continued today for two missing miners after a rockburst 3.4 km below the surface at Western Deep Levels' East Mine yesterday.

The rockburst killed one miner and injured five others. Two of the injured miners have been admitted to the Western Deep Levels Hospital with "slight injuries." An Anglo American Gold and Uranium Division spokesman said the blast measured a "fairly big" 3.5 on the Richter scale.

"Rockbursts are fairly frequent in deep level mining, but not in every case are miners injured. Rockbursts are a factor in deep level mining, we try to monitor active areas, but don't know where the next one is going to strike. They are part of everyday life on the goldmines," she said.

The name of the dead miner is being withheld until the next of kin have been contacted.